

## Arab League urges greater EU role

DUBAI (R) - The Arab League on Monday called for a greater European Union (EU) role in the Middle East peace process. Esmat Abdul Meguid, secretary-general of the 22-member league, said in a message ahead of a conference on European and Arab cooperation on the peace process: "It is our hope that member states of the EU will play in the peace process a far greater role in line with the weight of Europe on the international domain and the volume of European interest in the Middle East." Mr. Abdul Meguid's message from the Cairo-based league was delivered on his behalf at a news conference in Dubai, where he is due to head Arab delegations to the three-day conference starting April 3. European Commission Vice President Manuel Marín and the EU's special envoy to the peace process, Miguel Moratinos, are among participants from the European side.

# Jordan Times

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## W. Bank confrontations continue; PNA rejects Israeli terms for talks

### Arafat in Sri Lanka, rebuffs Levy's demand for his urgent return home

Combined agency dispatches

ISRAELI TROOPS clashed with Palestinians for the fifth straight day on Monday over construction of a Jewish settlement in Arab East Jerusalem which has sparked violence and threatened peace.

Security officials remained on high alert for more suicide bombings after a militant blew himself up at a Tel Aviv cafe on Friday, killing three Israeli women.

In Colombo, visiting Palestinian President Yasser Arafat rejected calls by Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy to cut short a trip abroad and return home to "fight terrorism."

Mr. Arafat told a meeting in the Sri Lankan capital Colombo that he was seeking the support of the international community to keep the Middle East peace process alive despite attempts by Israel to scuttle the initiative.

Asked for his reaction to a call by Mr. Levy to return home, Mr. Arafat said: "He hasn't the right to give me orders."

Mr. Arafat, who arrived here from Islamabad after an Islamic summit (see page 12), is due to leave for Bangladesh on Tuesday.

"We are passing through a very difficult situation because the new government of Israel is not implementing accurately and honestly what we have signed between me and (late Prime Minister Yitzhak) Rabin who paid with his life for the peace of the state," Mr. Arafat said.

Mr. Levy said earlier: "Mr. Arafat's presence is a must. Without him, there is nobody

capable of giving the necessary instructions to put an end to terrorism."

"The head of the Palestinian (National) Authority (PNA) must understand that the problems can only be solved here, not abroad," he said, referring to Mr. Arafat's week-long tour which started Saturday in Pakistan and will also take in Egypt and Morocco.

Palestinians said Israeli troops shot and wounded a Palestinian in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip. An Israeli army spokesman said a soldier opened fire after two petrol bombs were thrown at troops in the town on the Egyptian border but did not know of any casualties.

"Ayman Qisbteh, 29, was driving his car to the seashore but the Israelis shot him twice in the back," Khaled Abu Al Laila, head of the Palestinian liaison office with the Israeli army in the area, told Reuters.

In Bethlehem, soldiers fired tear-gas and rubber bullets to disperse a few hundred Palestinian stone-throwers, witnesses said. A Bethlehem hospital spokesman said protesters were treated for tear-gas inhalation.

Similar clashes also erupted in Hebron, site of fierce confrontations over the weekend, witnesses said.

The unrest erupted last Thursday, two days after Israeli bulldozers broke ground for a new settlement at Jabal Abu Ghneim in Arab East Jerusalem.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, elected last May promising more security for Israelis, has blamed Mr. Arafat for giving militants a "green light" to launch attacks against the Jewish state. Mr.

Arafat denies the charge. Friday's bombing further marred Israel-PNA ties already strained over the construction in Arab East Jerusalem.

Israel demanded the PNA crack down on militants. The PNA said it would not be a client militia for Israel.

PNA chief negotiator Saeb Erekat said Mr. Netanyahu's settlement building was spurring militants and killing peace.

"The minute Mr. Netanyahu decided to send his bulldozers to the mountain, he was inciting for violence and strengthening extremism," Mr. Erekat told Reuters.

"We don't feel we have partners anymore," he said.

Israel deployed thousands of troops along its borders with the West Bank and Gaza and erected roadblocks on major highways to prevent would-be bombers reaching their destinations.

The closure prevented some 50,000 Palestinians with work permits from reaching their jobs.

"We estimate that as long as Arafat does not cause the terrorist organizations to understand that there is no green light to commit attacks, we are expecting more attacks," said Israel's military intelligence chief, Moshe Yaalon.

Palestinians denied Mr. Yaalon's assertion that Mr. Arafat's own Fateh group and top PNA security officials had instigated the clashes with Israeli soldiers in the West Bank.

Israeli President Ezer Weizman met Monday with Palestinian Information and Culture Minister Yasser Abed Rabbo.



Palestinians attack Israeli soldiers as clashes broke out again on Monday in the Israeli controlled area of Rachel's Tomb in Bethlehem (AFP photo)

## Muscat warns Israel of total break in relations

MUSCAT (AFP) — Oman has warned of a total break in relations with the Jewish state unless Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu changes direction to save the peace process, newspapers here reported Monday.

"Ties are frozen and can in no way be developed so long as the Netanyahu government continues not to respect its accords" with the Palestinians, said Oman's minister of state for foreign affairs, Yusef Ben Alawi Ben Abdullah.

"If there is no possibility for Israel to change its policy, I think we will no longer be able to have any link with this government," he said at the Islamic summit in Islamabad on Sunday, quoted in Muscat newspapers.

But he added that Oman would "pursue its efforts to push Israel to respect" the autonomy accords.

Oman and Qatar are the only Gulf Arab states to have launched a process of normalization with Israel following the launch of Palestinian self-rule in 1994. The process has been frozen in the wake of Mr. Netanyahu's election last May.

Israel has a trade office in Muscat, while the head of a similar Omani mission in Israel left his post in January and has not returned.

### German appeal

German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel appealed to Palestinians and Israelis to work to save the tottering peace process in the Middle East.

"I call on the Palestinian side to use all avenues of negotiation, everything within its means to prevent new attacks... and to make its people understand that violence and terrorism are not the answer to their deception and frustration," he said in an interview with German radio.

He also appealed to the Israeli government to avoid making any decisions that could aggravate the situation in the Palestinian territories and raise tensions.

## Ashrawi accuses Israel of endangering peace process with extremism, hegemony

GENEVA (Agencies) — A senior Palestinian official accused Israel on Monday of besieging Jerusalem and endangering the peace process with extremism and territorial expansionism over its plan to build Jewish settlements in the city's Arab East.

Hanan Ashrawi, Minister of Higher Education in the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), said Israel was trying to extract Jerusalem from the heart of Palestine, holding 3,000 Palestinians as hostage and sanctioning torture against them.

"The bulldozers are burying the prospects, and our dreams, of peace," she told some 2,000 officials and diplomats meeting at the annual United Nations Human Rights Commission in Geneva.

Ms. Ashrawi's speech was delayed by behind-the-scenes diplomatic squabbles over whether she should be allowed to use the main podium speaker.

In a similar dispute last week, East Timor independence leader and Nobel laureate Jose Ramos Horta was blocked from speaking from the main podium microphone by Indonesia, which invaded East Timor in 1975, and its Asian allies.

Diplomats said the United States, which thwarted a U.N. condemnation of Tel Aviv over its housing plan, and Israel objected to Ms. Ashrawi's address to the forum from the podium.

The forum eventually gave Ms. Ashrawi the podium microphone, where she thanked the commission for recognizing that "occupation doesn't extend beyond Palestine's borders."

Israel's U.N. ambassador to Geneva, Yusef Lamdan, said in a statement he

regretted Ms. Ashrawi's use of the podium after Friday's suicide bombing in Tel Aviv that killed three Israelis.

A U.S. mission spokesman said Washington had raised a "procedural" question about the microphone's use because Ms. Ashrawi represented an observer state but that it agreed to her speech at the "courtesy of the commission."

Ms. Ashrawi said Israeli extremism was feeding extremism among Palestinians. She accused Israel of tightening its economic grip over Palestine by blocking safe passage between Gaza and the West Bank and Palestinian use of the local airport and harbor.

"We witness in Israel the resurgence of the mentality of domination, ideology, patronage and control," she said.

Israel, she said, exploited the peace process "to confiscate more Palestinian land, build and expand settlements, consolidate its illegal annexation of occupied Jerusalem and complete the siege and isolation of the city."

She told the 53rd commission session: "I congratulate the commission on the fact that it has not exercised discrimination and that the occupation does not extend beyond the borders of Palestine."

"The bulldozers of Jabal Abu Ghneim are burying the prospects and our dreams of peace," said Ms. Ashrawi. "Jerusalem is the lynchpin of peace — a city much greater than itself and not subject to exclusive possession."

(Continued on page 7)

## Three executed in Lebanon

BEIRUT (Agencies) — Three men were hanged here Monday for the murder of a Lebanese cleric from a rival Muslim sect, legal officials said. Police deployed around Roumieh prison, where the dawn execution took place, and the Palestinian refugee camp of 'Ain Al Hilweh in southern Lebanon after warnings of protests. The three men — a Palestinian, Munir Abbud, and two Lebanese, Ahmad Al Kasm and Khaled Mohammad Hamed — were convicted of murdering pro-Syrian cleric Sheikh Nizar Halabi in August 1995. A fourth man, Palestinian Ahmad Abdul Karim Al Saadi, was sentenced to death in his absence for masterminding the attack. He is believed to be hiding in 'Ain Al Hilweh camp, which is out of bounds to the Lebanese army. Mr. Saadi heads a small radical group bitterly opposed to the ideas of Sheikh Halabi, who ran an Islamic charity organization.

## King and Clinton to meet on April 1

AMMAN (J.T.) — The White House meeting between His Majesty King Hussein and U.S. President Bill Clinton has been set for April 1, officials said Tuesday.

The officials said the main focus of the meeting would be the crisis in the Middle East peace process in light of Israel's arbitrary measures in the occupied territories, including Arab East Jerusalem, and Jordanian-American relations and cooperation in various spheres.

The King, who left Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, on Sunday after a successful medical check-up, is scheduled to visit New York for a meeting with the new U.N. secretary-general, Kofi Annan, before going to Washington.

In Washington, the King will also hold talks with U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, Defence Secretary William Cohen and Commerce Secretary William Daley as well as Congress members.

On Sunday, the King's personal physician, Samir Farraj, said the monarch underwent routine medical checkups at Mayo Clinic and the tests found that he was totally free of cancer for which he had a successful surgery at the same clinic in 1992.

Mayo Clinic doctors also recommended that the King undergo a minor surgery to address a problem in the prostate gland. Dr. Farraj said.

Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali on Monday sent a message of congratulations to the King over the tests that found the monarch totally free of cancer, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, said. Lower House of Parliament Speaker Sa'ad Hayel Sour also sent a similar message to the King, Petra said.

### Regent meets Ralston

In Amman, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, on Monday reviewed with Deputy Chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs-of-Staff Lieutenant-General Joseph Ralston the latest developments in the Middle East.

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## Arafat did not give 'green signal' to bombing, says Hamas military chief

BEIT HANOUN (Agencies) — A Hamas military chief on trial in Israel denied Monday that the Palestinian group's suicide bombing of a Tel Aviv cafe followed a "green light" from Palestinian President Yasser Arafat.

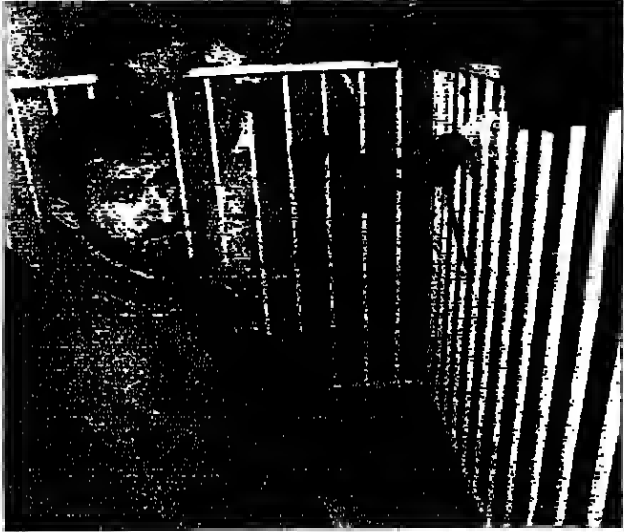
"Hamas has no need of a green light from Mr. Arafat," said Hassan Salameh, considered the mastermind of three Hamas suicide bomb attacks in Israel which killed 35 people a year ago.

The Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) claimed responsibility for the suicide bombing of a Tel Aviv cafe on Friday which killed three Israeli women and left nearly 50 people injured.

Israel has laid the blame for the blast on Mr. Arafat. Palestinian National Authority (PNA), saying it had given the "green light" for such attacks and had failed to crack down on militants.

"I think the attack did not depend on Arafat. These attacks serve the interest of the Palestinian people, who need to achieve independence," Mr. Salameh said during a hearing before a military court at the Beit Hanoun crossing point between Israel and Gaza.

Hamas said the bombing was carried out in retaliation for the start of construction work last week of



Hassan Salameh, accused of being the mastermind behind last year's wave of suicide bombings in Israel, sits behind a fence in an Israeli military court on Monday. The trial was postponed for a second time until he finds a lawyer to represent him (AFP photo)

a new Jewish settlement in Arab East Jerusalem.

Hamas's jailed spiritual leader Sheikh Ahmad Yassin said Palestinians "cannot remain silent over what Israel is doing by ignoring Palestinian rights. Israel will not know peace or comfort as long as there is occupation."

"The Tel Aviv attack is a natural and expected reaction to Israeli policies," he said in an interview with Arab-Israeli Deputy Hashim Mahamid in the hospital of Israel's Ramla prison, according to the Palestinian daily Al Ayam.

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## U.N. teams in place as more food arrives in Iraq

BAGHDAD (Agencies) — Over 100 international observers are deployed throughout Iraq to supervise the arrival and distribution of supplies for the sanctions-hit nation under a U.N. oil-for-food deal.

Under the U.N. deal Iraq is allowed to sell \$2 billion worth of oil in six months to buy humanitarian needs for Iraqis, suffering from U.N. sanctions imposed for Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

Vehicles and communications equipment for the observers were arriving in Iraq, the source said. "We are all set to ensure that food is fairly distributed," he said.

Of the \$2 billion of revenue Iraq will be left with about \$1.3 billion after funnelling 30 per cent to a Gulf war reparations fund and paying for other U.N. costs. Food and medicine worth \$260 million is earmarked to the Kurdish areas currently outside the control of

the central government in Baghdad.

The U.N. source said the observers were trying hard to prove to the Iraqis they were here to help and not obstruct the implementation of the oil-for-food deal.

Experts have been deployed at Umm Qasr and briefed by U.N. officials on how to monitor the delivery, while others have been placed on the borders with Turkey and Jordan, the two overland entry points for goods.

The first trucks from Jordan are expected to arrive with 1,500 tonnes of salt later this week, while nine ships are to sail into Umm Qasr in early April with 250,000 tonnes of French and Australian wheat.

The imports have strengthened the Iraqi dinar from 1,140 to the dollar on Sunday to 1,005 against the U.S. currency the next day, money-changers in the capital said.

But no date has been

announced for the distribution of food, medicine and other humanitarian supplies under the deal which took effect on Dec. 10 when Iraq resumed oil exports for the first time in six years.

U.N. officials want to wait until at least enough rice, wheat or some other commodity has arrived to feed Iraq's 22 million people before distribution begins.

Other obstacles to quick distribution are technical since the wheat, for example, must be crushed to make flour.

One U.N. official in Baghdad described the operation as unprecedented because it requires coordination from half a dozen U.N. agencies and suppliers worldwide.

"This is the most complex humanitarian undertaking the U.N. has ever been involved in, in terms of the number of partners," the

(Continued on page 7)



## Saudi crown prince to attend Tehran OIC summit, Iran reports

TEHRAN (Agencies) — Saudi Arabia's crown prince is to travel to Tehran in the first visit by a Saudi leader since Iran's 1979 Revolution, the official Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) said Monday.

Crown Prince Abdullah will take part in a summit of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) in Tehran in December, the agency said.

The Saudi prince told Iranian President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani of his decision to make the trip to Tehran when the two leaders met Sunday on the sidelines of a special OIC summit in Islamabad, IRNA said.

The two leaders also discussed efforts to improve troubled relations between their two countries, it said.

The agency quoted Mr. Rafsanjani as saying that good Saudi-Iranian relations "will guarantee security and stability in the region" and condemning those he said were trying to sabotage such ties, in a reference to the United States.

The Arabic daily Al Hayat, meanwhile, quoted Mr. Rafsanjani as saying he had cleared up "ambiguities" with Saudi Arabia at his meeting with Crown Prince Abdullah.

Relations have been

strained between the two countries since 1979, with Iran calling for marches against Israel and the United States during the annual pilgrimage to Mecca in Saudi Arabia where political demonstrations are banned.

However, Iran's Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati visited Saudi Arabia earlier this month for the first time since 1993 and hailed what he called the "new chapter in good neighbourly relations."

In Islamabad, Mr. Rafsanjani also reiterated his country's support for Lebanon during a meeting with Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri.

"We are on Lebanon's side until you drive Israel from your territory," Mr. Rafsanjani said.

Mr. Hariri, meanwhile, announced that he will soon visit Iran.

In a television interview Sunday, Mr. Rafsanjani denied that Iran funded anti-Israel "terrorism."

While Mr. Rafsanjani said Iran opposed the Middle East peace process, he added that "we are not alone. Many Palestinians speak like us. They take action. We do not take action."

Mr. Rafsanjani's comments came in a wide-ranging interview broadcast on

the top-rated CBS programme "Sixty Minutes."

"We have said we do not consider this peace a fair peace," Mr. Rafsanjani said of the peace process. "This process will not succeed because it has not addressed the issues of refugees."

On another topic, Mr. Rafsanjani smiled when asked about an Iranian government crackdown on satellite dishes which bring Western television programmes into Iran and specifically about the worldwide hit "Baywatch."

"You must admit that these types of programmes cause problems for young people ... and weaken the foundation for the family," Mr. Rafsanjani said through an interpreter.

Baywatch is a wildly successful beach-themed programme noted for its focus on scantily clad young women.

Mr. Rafsanjani added that "things like the Playboy channel ... do not help the progress of your country or your people," referring to a U.S. channel that features pornographic films.

Asked if he had a satellite dish to know so much about foreign programming, Mr. Rafsanjani said no. "We hear these things. We read these things in reports," he told CBS.

## Iraqi women demand Iran free PoWs

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Hundreds of women staged a protest outside UN offices in the Iraqi capital on Monday for Iran to release prisoners from the 1980-1988 war between the two neighbours.

The demonstrators carried photographs of relatives either missing from the conflict or taken prisoner.

"In the name of Islam, in the name of humanity, I beg the Iranians to do something so I can see my son again," cried one of the women, who were dressed in black.

"We want Iran to hear our call and free our children. We've already waited 15 years to see them again," another demonstrator said.

Iraq, launching a week-long campaign on the prisoners issue, called Sunday for humanitarian groups to step up pressure on Iran to



Iraqis wielding photos of their sons detained in Iran since the 1980-1988 war between Iraq and Iran demonstrate in Baghdad on Monday demanding that Iran release the detainees (AFP photo)

release Iraqis captured during the eight-year conflict. The question of prisoners of war (PoWs) and the missing is a key obstacle to

a normalisation of relations between the two former foes. Tehran denies holding almost 20,000 Iraqis, while

charging that at least 5,000 Iraqis are still being detained in Iraq. Baghdad insists all Iranian prisoners have been released.

## Cholera outbreak claims 430 lives in south Somalia

NAIROBI (AFP) — A cholera outbreak in the southern Somalia town of Wajaleyn has killed more than 430 people over the past month, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) said Monday.

The deaths occurred between Feb. 15 and March 17, an ICRC Somalia newsletter said.

"To date, almost 2,000 cases of the disease have been reported in the area, about 90 kilometres west of Mogadishu," the newsletter said.

ICRC health officials who carried out an initial survey in Wajaleyn — home to between 10,000 and 13,000 families — said only one of the five wells in the town was functioning.

The agency has donated medical supplies, including

oral-rehydration solutions and antibiotics to the affected people and made arrangements for eight local people to be trained in preventive and curative medical care by Somali Red Crescent personnel in Mogadishu.

Local people have set up an isolation camp for cholera patients and ICRC engineers are supplying water to the camp.

Meanwhile the ICRC has completed the first phase of a major flood protection programme in southern Somalia's Juha Valley, where flooding regularly destroys crops, causing severe hardship to farming communities.

The project involves rehabilitating more than 100 damaged sections of dykes built to protect fields bordering the Juha River.

## Families of jailed British nurses visit Saudi prison

RIYADH (AFP) — The families of two Britons accused of murdering a fellow nurse have visited the women in a Saudi jail and seen their lawyer, a British embassy spokesman said Monday.

The spokesmen said the families of Deborah Parry, 41, and Lucille McLaughlin, 31, visited Dammam prison on Saturday and Sunday. One has already returned to Britain and the other family is flying back Monday.

Their first reunion was on Jan. 12-13. The lawyer, Salah Al Hejailan, met here last week with the families of Ms. Parry and Ms. McLaughlin, who are accused of stabbing and choking to death Australian nurse Yvonne Gilford at a Dhamran hospital on Dec. 11.

He reviewed with the families the legal strategy for the defence in the continuing effort to keep the nurses and their

families well informed and involved in the defence," said Mr. Hejailan's law firm.

Earlier this month, Mr. Hejailan said he plans to appeal to Gilford's family in Australia to have any death sentence waived before the case comes to trial.

Under Islamic law in the Saudi kingdom, the victim's family may demand the death sentence or grant mercy. The family of the murdered nurse has previously made it clear they do not favour mercy.

"The fate of any accused person for murder in Saudi Arabia is really in the hands of the victim's family," the defence lawyer said in an interview with British radio, during a visit to Britain. "While I'm fairly optimistic of the situation of my clients I think an early indication on his part would be helpful," he said, referring to a male family member.

## Hamas spiritual head calls bombing 'natural reaction'

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — The jailed spiritual leader of Hamas said in remarks published Monday that the Palestinian group's suicide bombing of a Tel Aviv cafe was a "natural reaction" to Israeli occupation.

Sheikh Ahmad Yassin said Palestinians "cannot remain silent over what Israel is doing by ignoring Palestinian rights. Israel will not know peace or comfort as long as there is occupation."

"The Tel Aviv attack is a natural and expected reaction to Israeli policies," he said in an interview with Arab-Israeli Deputy Hashim Mahamid in the hospital of Israel's Ramla prison, according to the Palestinian daily Al Ayyam.

Israel "should stop its bulldozer work (in building settlements) and put an end to occupation and oppression," he said.

Sheikh Yassin, 61, sentenced to life imprisonment by Israel in 1991, has in the past come out in favour of the peace process and called on his Hamas followers to support President Yasser Arafat's Palestinian National Authority.

But Hamas officials have said they cannot trust statements by their ailing spiritual leader as long as he is in Israeli hands.

The Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) claimed responsibility for the suicide bombing of a Tel Aviv cafe on Friday which killed three Israeli women and left nearly 50 people injured.

The group said the bombing was carried out in retaliation for the start to construction work last week of a new Jewish settlement in Arab East Jerusalem.

The mufti of Jerusalem accused the United States of bearing responsibility for Israel's settlement policy, in statements published on Monday.

"I hold the United States responsible for Israel's settlement policy," Sheikh Akrama Sabri told the Arab newspaper Al Hayat as he arrived Sunday in Oman to attend a week devoted to Jerusalem.

"Washington's use of the veto two times means giving a boost to Israel to continue in its settlement policy," the Muslim cleric said.

"How can America sponsor the peace process each time it supports Israel against us?" he added.

"As long as the United States continues to support Israel I expect no change."

The United States twice vetoed a resolution at the U.N. Security Council calling on Israel to halt construction of the new Jewish settlement in Arab East Jerusalem. Washington has nevertheless criticised the Israeli measure.

Asked about the killing last week of civilians in a Palestinian suicide bomb attack on a Tel Aviv cafe, the cleric said: "There are no civilians and soldiers in Israel. They are all conscripts. They all carry arms."

## Netanyahu braves hostile Arab audience on satellite TV

TEL AVIV (AP) — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu took it on the chin Sunday in a rare appearance on Arab television.

One talk show caller compared him to Adolf Hitler, and the host accused him of evading questions and passed on recommendations that he resign.

Appearing on Orbit satellite television, a Saudi-run service broadcast throughout the region, Mr. Netanyahu insisted that he was not responsible for the recent weeks' deterioration in Israeli-Palestinian relations.

The main thing was for Palestinian President Yasser Arafat to crack down on militant groups such as Hamas, which claimed Friday's suicide bombing in a Tel Aviv cafe that left three Israeli women dead.

But most callers to the "on air" programme — as well as the combative host, Enad Adibeddin — were sceptical. "Do you know, Mr. Prime Minister, how the Arabs are looking at you now? They think you treat the Palestinians as Hitler treated the Jews," said one

man who called himself Abu Ahmad and did not give his city of residence.

Mr. Netanyahu angrily shifted in his seat as Abu Ahmad continued: "When will you stop this arrogance?"

"I hate it when people describe me as Hitler," Mr. Netanyahu shot back, scowling. "We've never done the things he did. This is totally rejected. Abu Ahmad, please, don't use such words. Respect me as I am respecting you."

Abu Omar, from Riyadh, alleged that Mr. Netanyahu's behaviour

"makes it seem that you look down at the Arabs."

"That's not true," Mr. Netanyahu sighed. "I treat Arabs like Jews."

"When will the tragedies stop?" inquired Faisal, also from Riyadh. When Mr. Arafat orders the militant groups to stop attacks, Mr. Netanyahu replied, repeating his claim of the past week that Mr. Arafat had given the green light for attacks on Israel.

Mr. Netanyahu said he would not stop the construction of a new Jewish settlement in Arab East Jerusalem that unleashed

the recent tensions.

"I will not freeze building in Har Homa and I will not ask Arafat to stop building in Kalkilya," Mr. Netanyahu said, referring to an autonomous Palestinian town in the West Bank.

Mr. Adibeddin accused Mr. Netanyahu of evading all the difficult questions, and advised the Israeli leader that most Arabs would prefer that he resign.

"I do not decide who should lead the Palestinians," Mr. Netanyahu noted.

## JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

### JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 773111-19

### PROGRAMME TWO

14:05 Cartoon — Budge-The Little Helicopter

14:30 ...Grimmy

15:00 ...French Programmes

16:00 ...Super Sports Footies

16:30 ...Dog House

17:00 Preserving for the Taste of a

17:15 ...The Album Show

18:00 ...French Programmes

19:30 ...News Headlines

19:35 ...Comedy — The Office

20:00 ...Superstars of Action

20:30 ...Encounter

21:10 ...The Nature of Things

22:00 ...News in English

22:25 ...Sawny River

23:00 ...Mission Impossible

### PRAYER TIMES

04:12 ...Fajr

05:30 ...Sunrise/Duha

11:42 ...Dhuhr

15:11 ...Asr

17:54 ...Maghrib

18:11 ...Isha

### CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church

Sweifeh, Tel. 810740

Assemblies of God Church

Tel. 632785

St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590

Church of the Annunciation

Tel. 637440

De la Salle Church Tel.

661757

Terra Sancta Church Tel.

622366

Anglican Church Tel. 652826

Armenian Catholic Church

Tel. 771331

Armenian Orthodox Church

Tel. 775261

St. Ephraim Church Tel.

771751

Armenian International Church

Tel. 652526

Evangelical Lutheran Church

Tel. 824328

German-speaking Evangelical

Congregation Tel. 845457

The Latter-Day Saints Tel.

654932

Church of Nazarene Tel.

675691

The Evangelical Local Church

in Amman Tel. 811295

English-speaking

Latin Catholics Parish Tel.

614190

### WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department

of Meteorology

Under the effect of a cold air

mass accompanied by a depression,

it will be cold, cloudy, and

rainy. Snow is expected to fall

over hilly areas that are 1,100

metres above sea level with

winds becoming westerly moder-

ate to active. On Wednesday,

skies will be sunny to partly

cloudy. Temperatures will rise

gradually and winds easterly

moderate. In Aqaba, skies will

be partly cloudy; winds northerly

moderate and seas calm.

Amman ... 03/07

Aqaba ... 10/17

Deserts ... 02/11

Jordan Valley ... 09/16

Yesterday's high temperatures:

Amman 8, Aqaba 18 Humidity

readings: Amman 78 per cent.

Aqaba 53 per cent.

### USEFUL

### TELEPHONE

### NUMBERS

### NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:

Dr. Ghaleb Zawaideh ... 736011

Dr. Jihad Sammour ... 765018

Dr. Khalid Asfour ... 699440

Dr. Bilal Al Sayid ... 890280

Ferdows pharmacy ... 778336

Al Asema pharmacy ... 637055

Al Salam pharmacy ... 636730

Yacoub pharmacy ... 644945

Shmeisani pharmacy ... 637660

Nairoukh pharmacy ... 623672

Najib pharmacy ... 847632

IRBID:

Dr. Ghazi Qanu ... 250080

Al Quds pharmacy ... (—)

ZARQA:

Dr. Akram Haddad ... 985550

Khalifeh pharmacy ... 985417

### EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre ... 637111

Civil Defence Dept ... 661111

Civil Defence Immediate Resc-

cue ... 630341

Civil Defence Emergency ... 199

Rescue Police 192, 621111,

637777

Fire Brigade ... 617101

Blood Bank ... 775121

Highway Police ... 843402

Traffic Police ... 896390

Public Security Department

... 630321

Hotel Complaints ... 605800

Price Complaints ... 661176

Water and Sewerage Com-

plaints ... 897467

Amman Municipality Com-

plaints ... 787111

Telephone Information (direc-

tory assistance) ... 121

Overseas Calls ... 010230

Central Amman Telephone

Repairs ... 623101

Abdali Telephone Repairs

661101

Jordan Television ... 773111

Radio Jordan ... 274111

Water Authority ... 680100

Jordan Electricity Authority

... 815615

Electric Power Company

636381



## 'Prime minister pledges close contact and cooperation with Parliament'

AMMAN (J.T.) — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali has pledged to initiate channels of contact and cooperation with Parliament, both during its current recess and before the upcoming general elections. Senate Speaker Ahmad Lawzi affirmed Monday.

Subsequent to a Parliamentary visit by the prime minister on Monday, Mr. Lawzi reported that he assured Dr. Majali that the Senate would closely cooperate with the new government to help implement His Majesty King Hussein's directives as outlined in his

letter of designation to Dr. Majali. The prime minister also received assurances of cooperation in facilitating government tasks from Lower House of Parliament Speaker Sa'd Hayel Srour. Following a meeting with Dr. Majali, Mr. Srour maintained that agreement was reached regarding regular meetings between the government and the Lower House of Parliament so that deputies might remain updated as to government plans and future programmes. They also agreed upon ways of briefing the House on the Kingdom's

policies at Jordanian, pan-Arab and international arenas. Mr. Srour promised continued cooperation with the executive authority. He said that the premier is expected to meet with the deputies subsequent to his return from a projected visit to the United States where he will accompany the King in meetings with U.S. officials. A Royal Decree declared that Parliament enter recess on March 19. Barring an extraordinary session, approved by Royal Decree, the House will convene only after general elections

## Court acquits couple of child's murder

By Rana Hussein  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Amman Criminal Court last week acquitted a couple of the premeditated murder of their 10-month old daughter in Aqaba in October of last year. The court tribunal, which adjourned in Aqaba for one week, declared Imam Abdullah Farhan, and his wife, Tamam Ahmad, both 28, not guilty of the murder of their daughter Rania and ordered their immediate release from detention. According to court documents, Rania was born in January 1996 and shortly thereafter suffered both a tetanus infection and severe dehydration.

The prosecution charged that the couple, married since 1990 and parents of three other daughters, had

no money to cure Rania and purposely neglected their child to be rid of her. "The couple purposely neglected to feed their daughter or administer the appropriate treatment so that she would die," the prosecution charged in October of last year. The prosecution further charged that on Oct. 2 of the same year, Mr. Farhan asked his friend Sadiq Tawfiq to help him bury his daughter alive, "as he had no money to pay for her milk or medicine."

But in its ruling last week, the tribunal, headed by Justices Abdul Rahman Tawfiq, Ismael Hmouz and Abdul Hamid Sa'ad, said that the prosecution failed to present enough evidence to convict the parents as responsible for their daughter's death. In fact, the court added,

the prosecution contradicted itself by presenting witnesses who testified in court that Rania's family did, indeed, take care of their daughter and provided her with both milk and medicine. "One of the witnesses stated that Mr. Farhan often borrowed money from him to buy his sick daughter milk," the court stated. Further, the court stated that Mr. Tawfiq testified that Rania's father asked him to help him bury his daughter as the former was under the impression that the child had died. "I informed him that his daughter was in her last breath and that he couldn't bury her alive," Mr. Tawfiq said in his testimony. The court said that it relied on the testimony of forensic experts which stated that Rania died of dehy-

dration, and malnutrition. "Dehydration can lead to death, even if the family supplied their newborn with milk and medicine," the expert said. According to court documents, Rania died on Oct. 2 and her father placed her in a black suitcase which he placed near a mosque in the Shaleh neighbourhood of Aqaba. When questioned by the court as to why he placed his daughter in a suitcase rather than burying her, he stated that he did not have JD 50, the amount of money needed for burial. Rania's decomposing body was found one week after her death, the court said, quoting the coroner's inquiry.

## Kingdom looks to wind power as desalinisation method

By Tanya Habjouque  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Advanced technology which could support industrialisation outside of Amman and provide drinking water to remote areas was showcased in the Kingdom Sunday. The German-based Thyssen Corporation has created a wind-powered sea water desalination plant, capable of supplying potable water to remote areas and islands. Citing the world population growth and dwindling water resources, Thyssen officials showcased their product to officials from the Royal Scientific Society (RSS), Jordan Valley Authority (JVA) as well as the private sector. "Water is a precious

necessity with a growing demand," Sales Manager of Thyssen Corporation Winfried Baldus said during the conference. "It is now possible to desalinate water for drinking and irrigation." The production of potable water by seawater desalination plants has increased from zero to almost 20,000,000 mcm per day over the past 30 years, one Thyssen official said. "There is a confirmed water shortage in Jordan, the water issue is of crucial importance," Jordanian representative for Thyssen, Jaber Nouri told the Jordan Times. Capable of supporting 3,000 inhabitants, the plant is environmentally friendly and requires only wind energy to create clean and potable water, Mr. Nouri said.

Ideal for Azraq, Jordan Valley, the Gulf of Aqaba, and army bases, such a plant could boost farming and industrialisation outside of Amman, he added. According to Thyssen officials, the plant is capable of transforming sea and brackish water into potable water with low maintenance costs not to exceed 2 per cent of the total project cost. The estimated cost to establish such a plant runs at approximately JD 1.05 million, but this may vary conforming to characteristics unique to Jordan, Mr. Nouri said. The Ministry of Planning will be approached to oversee this project, and we must submit a feasibility study to the German government in order to secure funding, he said.

International donors have water as a top priority for Jordan and for this reason we hope to secure aid from the European Union, he stated. For the past three years, the Thyssen Corporation has operated a wind-powered plant in Rugen, a North German settlement along the Baltic Sea and plans to establish one in Greece by the end of this year, company officials said. To establish a plant in Jordan would enable urbanisation and settlement outside of Amman as well as increase irrigation and farming, Mr. Nouri said. "We will need potable water to support growing industrialisation, investment, and tourism to the Kingdom," he concluded.

## Criminal Court examines weapon in case of former Sri Lankan consul

By Rana Hussein  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Criminal Court Monday postponed the case of the former Honorary Sri Lankan Consul in Jordan Tawfiq Abu Khajil, allegedly involved in a baby trafficking scam, to reexamine one of the weapons seized in the defendant's possession. The criminal lab examined a gun, one of several weapons seized at Mr. Abu Khajil's residence and determined that it was an antique, covered with rust.

But the court, headed by Justices Issam Abu Ghneim and Mohammed Ezeiz ordered the reexamination of the weapon before issuing a verdict. Judge Abu Ghneim set April 7 as the next court session to either issue a verdict or postpone the case for further examination. Formal charges pressed against Mr. Abu Khajil, a Jordanian businessman, include: use of forged documents, issuance of false certificates, sale of babies (illegal under a 1929 law against slavery), possession of unlicensed firearms,

import of illegal wireless devices, abuses of trust and forgery of government seal. Also standing trial beside Mr. Abu Khajil, is a Sri Lankan citizen, Anouma G.L., who is accused of agreeing to sell her baby and Andrea Bustani, 37, Mr. Abu Khajil's secretary, the latter of whom is being tried in absentia. The former honorary consul was arrested by authorities on March 13 of last year, shortly after airport police stopped a Dutch couple from leaving the country. They were carrying a five-

month old boy whom they believed they had adopted after paying a sum of \$8,000. The prosecution had charged that Mr. Abu Khajil was trafficking babies since 1991 and that he had sold 36 babies for a total of \$250,000. On March 3, Mr. Abu Khajil's defence team asked the court for the full acquittal of their client on all charges. Amman Prosecutor Ma'moun Muneizel had asked the court in his closing argument in February for the full conviction of all charges pressed against Mr. Abu Khajil.

## Weekly newspaper to hit stands today

AMMAN — A new weekly newspaper, entitled Al Mithaq, will hit the newspaper stands today, publishers said Monday. A government decision was taken last year denying a licence for the newspaper but in February the Supreme Court reversed this decision. "The Supreme Court's decision is a victory for press freedoms," said Nashed Hattar, an editor of the newspaper. Al Wihdeh Press and Publication Company (WPPC) filed a licence request to the Council of Ministers in July

of last year. Two months later, the Cabinet rejected their request and refused to issue a licence for the newly-established Al Mithaq. However, subsequent to the Supreme Court decision, on March 16, the Press and Publication Department (PPD) informed the WPPC of Cabinet approval to issue a licence for the newspaper, and named Rakan Sa'adeh as editor-in-chief of the newspaper. "We are aiming at becoming number one among the weeklies in Jordan," Mr.

Hattar told the Jordan Times. He added that the newspaper will adopt a professional mode, try to avoid sensationalism and instead depend on credibility, honesty and investigative reporting. "We want to focus on reflecting the social, political, economic and development issues in the Kingdom," he added. Previous to the Cabinet and PPD decision, Al Mithaq was partially operated by Mr. Hattar, a columnist for the weekly Shihaan, and journalist

Abdullah Abu Ruman. In August of 1996, authorities raided Al Mithaq's office, seized documents and arrested Mr. Abu Ruman on charges of lese majeste. Mr. Hattar evaded arrest and went into hiding shortly after the police raid. He was arrested in October on charges of slandering His Majesty King Hussein and HRH Crown Prince Hassan. The two journalists, both freed on bail, are currently being tried at the State Security Court. - R. H.

## King to receive Technion award

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Technion is to award His Majesty King Hussein an honorary doctorate in recognition of his leadership and commitment to peace in the Middle East. The Jerusalem Post reported Monday. King Hussein already has been informed of the award and has accepted an invitation to come to the Technion for the presentation, which is scheduled to take place at the international board of governors' meeting in June, the Post said. The Jerusalem Post said: A new laboratory and

academic chair in the field of water research, named in memory of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, is to be dedicated in the King's presence at the same time. The King, who was last year awarded the prestigious Churchill Prize in London by the British Technion Society, is expected to visit the Water Research Institute during his stay at the university. The institute is involved in a major programme aimed at increasing fresh-water sources for drinking and irrigation in cooperation with Jordan's Royal

Scientific Society and the Palestinian Water Authority. Experts in the field from the two countries and the Palestinian Authority are investigating ways of achieving this, including desalination by thermal and membrane processes, as well as the use of purified sewage for irrigation, and the recycling of waste water. Professor Uri Shamir, head of the Technion's Water Research Institute, said water always has been a vital issue in the Middle East. "Although achievements

in water development and usage have been among Israel's hallmarks, the country, along with its neighbours, is today facing a water crisis of serious proportions — a crisis which has deepened in the last decade, regardless of the amount of rainfall," Prof. Shamir said. He added that he is optimistic that the cooperative research by Israeli, Jordanian and Palestinian experts in the programme would help generate innovative ideas aimed at increasing water resources in the region.

## Workshop to address issue of child abuse on a national level

By Francesca Ciriaci  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Following expert calls for amendments to current policies as well as legislation to better address the issue of child abuse, the Jordan River for Development Projects (JRDP), in cooperation with the British Council and the British embassy in Amman, will today initiate a workshop on "Child Abuse and Protection." Although there are no exact figures on child abuse in the Kingdom, United Nations (UN) agencies and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) agree that the problem has increased as a result of rising social and economic stress, particularly among the poorer sectors. Lawyers, sociologists, human rights activists and social workers strongly

criticise the current penal code, according to which only the direct victim of such abuse has the right to file a complaint. They describe this legislation as inadequate to deal with such a delicate issue and have repeatedly called, in national and international conferences, for the introduction of special legislation dealing specifically with child abuse cases. The three-day workshop is widely expected to study current laws and mechanisms and suggest ways to more effectively structure the legal system in order to protect children. Two British experts are expected to lead the workshop's activities, including case studies on the recognition and disclosure of child abuse as well as treatment for abused children and family support. Senior Lecturer in Primary Education, Dominic Wyse and Deputy Director at the School of Health Angela Hawtin, both from Liverpool John Moores University, will also present a comparative overview of the problem of child abuse in the United Kingdom (UK). The three-day workshop,

to be held at the InterContinental Hotel, is scheduled to include information sessions on "Signs and symptoms of child abuse: physical, emotional, sexual and neglect" and "Problems in dealing with disclosure and how and when to encourage disclosure." According to the schedule released by the British Council, Thursday's closing session should lay the foundation for the development of future action plans to be carried out by individuals, professional groups, policy makers and legislators. According to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) 1992-1993 Report on "The State of the Jordanian Child," "there are no exact figures on child abuse in Jordan, but the problem is thought to have increased in recent years." "Corporal punishment is an unacceptable method of child-rearing and is allowed under existing laws. Sexual abuse is far more obscure to delineate, as it is not discussed in public," the

UNICEF report stated. In cooperation with UNICEF, the JRDP has been active since 1996 in income-generating projects which support 1,000 women throughout Jordan. The "Prevention of child abuse project" will "initiate media campaigns nationwide, publish communication material and conduct presentations at schools," a JRDP statement said. In addition, the JRDP focuses on "acting as a powerful lobby aimed at mobilising all concerned to review laws and programmes" and will be working in close cooperation with concerned ministries and the police force, the statement said.

## Scholars engage in roundtable discussion of Jordan's 'complex, sensitive' history

By Anca de Maio  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — When it comes to Jordanians' perceptions of their historical heritage, some historians and scholars agree that the subject is both "complex and sensitive." To elaborate the diverse historical approaches to the theme, leading historians at a roundtable discussion on Sunday advocated different readings of Jordan's history. During the discussion, which took up, among other issues, the question of what Jordanian historical heritage means, University of Jordan (UJ) history professor Ali Mahafza said that Jordanian heritage must be read within a regional Arab and Islamic context. His colleague, however, encouraged a more focused approach. AL al Bayt University President and professor of history Adnan Bakhti contended that the country's historical past must be examined at a local level. If the first position runs the risk of not being accepted by Jordan's neighbours, as Dr. Mahafza pointed out, Dr. Bakhti cautioned that those who prefer the local approach could be accused

of anti-Arabism and discrimination between Jordanians and Palestinians. He also said that although research on local history is difficult, it should be preferred to the pan-Arab vision which creates confusion among Jordanian students and citizens. When it came to defining Jordan's cultural heritage, the scholars were divided again along the aforementioned lines and thus provided two broad approaches: the spiritual values Jordanians share with other Arab countries (Canaanite, Phoenician, Mesopotamian, Akkadian and Babylonian heritages), as adhered to by Dr. Mahafza; and all material and spiritual values present on the territory of Jordan proper (the Nabataean, Roman, Byzantine or Islamic), an approach supported by Professor Mohammed Tarawneh of Yarmouk University. Included in the latter, maintained Professor Saleh Hamarneh of the UJ's Department of History is Christian heritage. But as for the feelings of Jordanian citizens towards their past, Dr. Hamarneh said there are cases of scepticism and confusion among, for example, students and tour guides.

According to Department of Antiquities Director Dr. Ghazi Bisheh, ordinary citizens' indifference to their historical heritage reduces the claim that the past nourishes the present and future to a simple "cliché." But taking the opposite view, Director of the Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology at Yarmouk University Zaydan Kafafi said that Jordanians' need for history is vital to the future development of the nation. To the same effect Professor Mohammed Tarawneh of Yarmouk University said that a gap between past, present and future could have a negative impact on individuals, especially on "academics as individuals."

Dr. Tawarnneh added that research work and history-writing is currently undergoing a moment of crisis and discontinuity, caused probably by political and official views. "Many of the participants' interventions ended with the conclusion that scientific and critical research on Jordan's historical heritage should be carried out on the basis of an updated functional methodology. In addition, Dr. Bisheh, said that teaching history at

the primary education level should be improved and that the tourist and economic exploitation of archaeological vestiges should be conducted rationally so as to avoid such situations as excavations affecting inhabitants' lives or hotel-building projects which are destructive to important monuments. Moreover, the West's ignorance of Arab civilisation in general and Jordanian identity in particular could be diminished by the promotion of a clearer image of Jordanian historical heritage in the world, Dr. Hamarneh stressed. Sunday's roundtable was part of a conference on the beginnings of social sciences in the Middle East organised by the CER-MOC, the French Centre of Studies and Research on the Contemporary Middle East. "The roundtable was not meant to give immediate explicit answers to all these questions," Dr. Tarawneh said. "This must be to have marked the starting point of a long debate and research work on Jordan's history," he concluded. The conference was hosted at the University of Jordan.

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## What's Going On

### FILM

\* British film "The Education of Rita" at Abdul Hameed Shorman Foundation, Jabal Amman at 6:30 p.m.

### CHILD ABUSE WORKSHOP

\* A 3-day workshop on "Child Abuse and Protection" at the Jordan InterContinental Hotel (25-27 March). The workshop aims at training a key group of people on how to identify, respond, and prevent child abuse.

### EXHIBITIONS

\* Artworks by Egyptian artist Jamil Shafiq entitled

"Black and White" at Baladna Art Gallery, Gardens street (Tel. 687598), until April 2.

\* Display of products by Jordan Design and Trade Centre of Noor Al Hussein Foundation, Wadi Saqra (Tel. 699141/2), until March 30.

\* Paintings by Saadi Duwood at the Orient Gallery, Issam Ajlouni St., Shmeisani, until March 31.

\* Artworks by Mohammad Ali Shaker at the French Cultural Centre, Jabal Weibdeh until March 31.

\* Works by Paris-based Syrian artist Ziad Dalloul at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh, until April 3. Also displaying works by contemporary Arab artists.



## No word from Zaire leader as Shaba province remains tense

KINSHASA (AFP) — Zairean President Mobutu Sese Seko was tight-lipped Monday on his plans for resolving the crisis in his war-torn country, as the situation in the resource-rich Shaba province now threatened by rebels remained tense.

South African Deputy President Thabo Mbeki said Sunday after a meeting with Mr. Mobutu that he was expecting the embattled leader to make an announcement before Wednesday that would take the Zairean peace process forward.

Mr. Mobutu himself said earlier that he would announce "within 48 hours" what role he would assume in efforts to end the civil war.

However there was no word Monday from the ailing president, who returned from the south of France after a prolonged absence Friday with a pledge to stop his country falling into the hands of rebels.

In a five-month offensive, rebel forces led by Laurent Desire Kabila have seized the eastern quarter of Zaire, taking the third city Kisangani last weekend and moving in on Lubumbashi, the second biggest.

There was fighting just north of Lubumbashi Sunday as government troops tried to impose discipline on runaway soldiers hoping to

loot the city in the face of the rebel advance.

The clash occurred Sunday afternoon at the village of Bwala, about 75 kilometres from Lubumbashi along the road to Kasenga.

There were no details on the total number of those involved or the number of casualties.

Government soldiers have run amok in every city taken so far by the mainly Tutsi rebels, looting and pillaging as the rebels close in before fleeing.

Sunday's clash came as part of broader attempts by Zairean military authorities to head off the plunder.

On Friday evening, soldiers of Zaire's Special Presidential Division (DSP) forcibly put down attempts at looting in Lubumbashi itself by around 12 soldiers who had fled advance positions in the northeast of Shaba.

Some 300 soldiers planning looting in the city of Mbuji-Mayi, 600 kilometres northwest of Lubumbashi, were also arrested, disarmed and flown to Kinshasa over the weekend, sources said.

Mr. Kabila said Saturday that his troops were closing in on Mbuji-Mayi, with advance units at Kabinda, 100 kilometres away.

Many Lubumbashi residents believe the rebels are now concentrating their advance on Mbuji-Mayi, with

its diamond wealth, rather than their own city, with its cobalt, copper and zinc mines.

The opposition in Lubumbashi expressed its support for the rebels Sunday.

"Kabila means change. He is achieving what we have always aimed for," said Stephane Lukonde-Kyenge, head of Uferi-Or, the main opposition group in Shaba.

In Kinshasa, however, opposition enthusiasm for Mr. Kabila and his Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire appeared to be on the wane.

Radical opposition leaders, hoping for partnership, are angry at calls by Mr. Kabila for their parties to "join the alliance" and at the ban on political parties imposed in territories now under rebel control.

Opposition papers Monday accused Mr. Kabila of heading for "a dangerous totalitarian tendency" and accused him of wanting to "arrogate all powers to the detriment of political and social forces whose contribution to the democratisation of the country is undeniable."

Meanwhile, a contingent of 150 U.S. soldiers left the U.S. base in Vicenza, northern Italy, Sunday for West Africa where they are to support an evacuation of Americans from Zaire should it become necessary,

U.S. military officials said.

The soldiers are to join a 30-member U.S. military assessment team already in the cities of Brazzaville and Libreville.

Meanwhile, France and the United States have launched a joint diplomatic bid to push for a ceasefire and talks between President Mobutu and rebels fighting to overthrow him, officials said Monday.

U.S. and French ambassadors were taking steps in some 20 African countries to argue the case, ahead of a summit of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in Lome, Togo, Wednesday, the French Foreign Ministry said.

Ministry spokesman Jacques Rummelhardt said the "joint initiative" by Paris and Washington was aimed at stressing "the importance of relations between our nations and to continue building a lasting peace" between the two countries.

The African countries being pressed over the issue include the 17 members of the OAU's conflict prevention body who will hold discussions in Lome on how to resolve the Zaire crisis.

U.S. and French diplomats will also push the case with other countries who are not members of this body, but who attended a summit on the crisis in Nairobi last week.



Zaire's President Mobutu Sese Seko (right) holds hands with South African Vice-President Thabo Mbeki (center) as he speaks to the press at his residence in Kinshasa. Mr. Mobutu was seen in public for the first time since his arrival in Zaire from France two days ago (Renter photo)

## Gore in Beijing to build 'lasting peace' between U.S. and China

BEIJING (AFP) — U.S. Vice-President Al Gore, who arrived in Beijing Monday for a five-day visit, said he had come to China "to continue building a lasting peace" between the two countries.

"I have traveled here to reaffirm the vital importance of relations between our nations and to continue building a lasting peace between China and the United States," he said in a statement released on his arrival in Beijing.

"Twenty-five years ago, our two nations issued the Shanghai Communiqué, and thereby ended a period of intense hostility reaching back to the Korean War," Mr. Gore said.

He was referring to a document signed in 1972 which opened a new era in relations between Washington and Beijing.

The communiqué "did not attempt to reconcile the differences between them," said Mr. Gore, the highest-ranking U.S. official to visit China since the Chinese army crushed the pro-democracy movement in Beijing's Tiananmen Square on June 4, 1989.

The vice-president added that "a stable and constructive relationship between China and the United States" was needed to achieve global peace.

Mr. Gore concluded the brief written statement by alluding to an exchange of visits U.S. President Bill Clinton and by his Chinese counterpart Jiang Zemin "in the coming months."

Hours earlier, China issued an attack accusing some in Washington of fueling "anti-China hysteria." But Mr. Gore's four-day trip is expected to open a new era of co-operation between the two countries, which have seen up-and-down political and trade ties in recent years.

Mr. Gore is to meet Premier Li Peng Tuesday and President Jiang Wednesday. "The visit by U.S. Vice-President Gore will be the highest-level event in recent years and will create suitable conditions for the improvement of the environment in bilateral financial, economic and trade relations," China's vice trade minister, Sun Zhenyu, said Friday.

"I will not exclude the possibility of signing agreements on certain projects ... and this also includes the purchase of Boeing airplanes," he said.

Aviation industry sources have hinted the deal would cover the purchase of at least five Boeing 777 aircraft and involve more than \$1 billion.

## Handover of Hong Kong to China will mark the end of British Empire

LONDON (AFP) — Britain leaves Hong Kong in less than 100 days, with a ceremony heralding the end of an empire and a promise to watch over the interests of 6.2 million inhabitants that Her Majesty's government will be hard-pressed to keep.

In the 13 years since the signing of the Sino-British joint declaration setting out conditions for Hong Kong 50 years after the handover, London has warned, demanded, cajoled Beijing to respect the terms and provisions of the agreement.

And in those same years, particularly since Hong Kong Governor Chris Patten's pro-democracy campaign which has angered Beijing, the Chinese have made it abundantly clear they would interpret the joint declaration as they see fit.

"We, for our part, intend to remain engaged in Hong Kong, engaged commercially, economically, culturally and politically," British Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind told parliament this week in his annual report on the colony.

Mr. Rifkind delivered his

report as the Joint Liaison Group (JLG), overseeing Hong Kong's return to Chinese sovereignty, was holding its penultimate meeting in London, agreeing on little except a provisional guest list for the handover ceremony.

London is counting on the JLG's mandate in Hong Kong, which theoretically extends to Jan. 1, 2000, to monitor China's promises to respect human rights, maintain capitalism, and Hong Kong's autonomy.

In short, Britain wants Beijing to make good on its 50-year vow of "one country, two systems" with respect to Hong Kong, which on July 1 become the China's Special Administrative Region (SAR).

The "one-two" idea, brainchild of supreme leader Deng Xiaoping, ratified by former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, aspires to turn Hong Kong into a one-of-a-kind multi-system state, a sort of two-headed economic dragon.

Britain claims to have a say in Hong Kong's future based on moral and consular consideration, citing the British overseas national

status it has given to some three million Hong Kong people.

Holders of the limited British passport, which does not allow residence in Britain, has been sarcastically renamed by those who hold it as "British National No. 1."

Britain, with tens of billions in investment in Hong Kong and some 1,000 British companies operating there, also has a certain economic interest in watching over its future.

China has not minced words, saying it would tolerate "no interference" by Britain, dismissing as "imperialist arrogance" the pro-democracy campaign of the governor whom it once scorned as a "tango dancer" and "prostitute."

Beijing, particularly in the regularly meetings of the JLG, has essentially turned a deaf ear to London's protestations, making it clear that come July 1, it will run Hong Kong as it sees fit with no need for British counsel.

London is also getting its share of criticism from the very Hong Kong Democrats it seeks to protect.

## Burma detains 100 monks in mosque attack

RANGOON (AFP) — Burmese authorities rounded up 100 militant monks after they stoned a mosque used by Indonesian embassy staff in western Rangoon, hauling them away in army trucks, witnesses said Monday.

The incident Sunday night was the first time monks had been detained by security forces in the capital since communal unrest spread from the northern city of Mandalay over the weekend.

Hundreds of residents in the mixed but mostly Buddhist neighbourhood looked on as monks stoned the mosque and were later taken away by security forces.

There were no injuries in the incident and the attackers were unable to gain access to the mosque as it had been locked up for the night.

Monks appeared at the mosque in Ahlone township when security forces stationed there had gone on their regular rounds of the area.

It was not immediately known whether the monks were still in detention.

Several mosques were ransacked and the house of a Muslim man destroyed by monks in Rangoon over the weekend despite a security presence around mosques and monasteries.

The general public has not joined the anti-Muslim attacks which began in Mandalay over the previous weekend.

The monks involved in Sunday's attack came from two monasteries which played a role in pro-democracy demonstrations crushed by the junta when it took power from the previous military government in 1988, observers noted.

Rangoon was calm Monday, with security forces maintaining a presence around mosques and monasteries, but life in most of the city was normal.

An 8:00 p.m. to 4:00 a.m. curfew was reported still in effect in seven Mandalay townships. Discontent was reported among monks in other cities, but reports that they had joined in acts of vandalism could not be confirmed.

The unrest started in Mandalay following the release of Muslim suspects in the attempted rape of a Buddhist girl at the beginning of the month.

But analysts said young monks there were already angry as the authorities had thwarted their attempts to organise demonstrations against the reported deaths of 16 of their number in prison.

The unrest in Rangoon came as a government-sponsored central welfare committee for monks held a three-day conference at the capital's Kaba Aye Pagoda, only the fourth such meeting in its 18-year existence.

The attacks marked official ceremonies at the Pagoda Sunday marking the end of the conference and the "Tabung" full moon day, an important holiday for Burmese Buddhists, who make up 85 per cent of the country's 46 million people.

Muslims comprise only 3.9 per cent of the population.

General Myo Nyunt, the junta's religious minister, took the opportunity to ask elder monks "to remove destructive elements within the monkhood," the official Burmese-language Mirror reported Monday.

Most of the more than 400,000 monks in the country were properly involved in propagating the Buddha's teachings, but some were disgracing the religion, he said.

Junta Second Secretary Tin Oo was cited as saying in the press Sunday that "big foreign nations and organisations" backing opposition and underground elements were behind it.

## EU to mark 40th anniversary of Treaty of Rome

BRUSSELS (R) — The European Union will take a brief break from economic and foreign policy worries Tuesday to celebrate the 40th anniversary of one of its most important agreements, the Treaty of Rome.

Foreign ministers from the 15-nation bloc will meet in Italy's capital to mark the signing on March 25, 1957, of the pact between West Germany, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg to create a common market.

The resulting European Economic Community is now the European Union, stretching from Ireland to Greece and Finland to Spain.

Forty years ago — amid heavy rain but with a vast crowd gathering to view what was already billed as a historic pact to forge peace — the goal was to bind the continent's economies so tightly together as to make armed conflict impossible.

It was particularly aimed at France and Germany, which had gone to war twice in the preceding half century.

The ministers who will meet Tuesday in Rome's capitol, where the treaty was signed, now represent a bloc with 350 million people, a huge single market, one voice on international trade, and tentative joint foreign and justice policies.

The bloc is also poised to take its most ambitious step, economic and monetary union (EMU), by Jan. 1, 1999.

This progress, European Commission President Jacques Santer said ahead of Tuesday's meeting, is the most significant result of the Treaty of Rome.

"Within the same century, the same countries that twice confronted each other are to share a single currency," he said.

Although the celebrations Tuesday will focus on what the EU has achieved — and few would deny that the Treaty of Rome has met its goals of creating peace and a common market among members — the event comes at a difficult time for the bloc.

It has proved incapable of reducing stubborn unemployment, currently running

at about 11 per cent across the EU.

The bloc has stood by helplessly as Renault workers and others have taken to the streets protesting the high-profile closure of a plant in Belgium, a move that tested commitment to Europe's "social model" of consultative labour policy.

Meeting the criteria for joining the single currency has made fighting unemployment even harder, limiting the spending countries can undertake as they try to reduce their traditionally bloated budget deficits.

In particular, Germany, the driving force behind EMU, finds itself in a dilemma. It is struggling to qualify for EMU, but if it fulfils the rules, it may also have to let in Italy with its relatively weak economy.

That would be anathema to Germany's monetary officials and to the German public, which is sceptical about giving up the mark in the first place. Financial markets, though accepting there is a political will behind EMU, have begun talking about a delay in launch-

ing the single currency until more countries are ready.

In foreign policy, the bloc was already bloodied by a failure to stop the war in Bosnia without the United States. Now it finds itself divided over how to proceed with Albania, an issue of particular concern to Tuesday's host, Italy.

But although there are problems aplenty and huge differences over how much political integration Europe should undergo, the EU's success has made membership a passionate goal of many countries outside its boundaries.

A dozen countries have applied for membership and the first former Communist states — probably Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic — should join some time early in the next decade. Even Russia has expressed interest in joining.

EU foreign ministers will meet Tuesday morning to discuss a new treaty to prepare the bloc for enlargement before adjourning to celebrate the 40 years of EU growth that has made it so attractive to others.

## EU seeks to finalise aid package for Albania

BRUSSELS (AFP) — European Union (EU) foreign ministers attempted Monday to finalise plans to send emergency humanitarian aid to crisis-hit Albania, possibly backed up by a small force of military police to ensure the security of convoys.

Austria and Italy, which is the EU country most directly affected by the crisis, presented proposals for getting food, medicine and other aid into Albania, where supplies are running low after three weeks of chaos.

But there were few signs of a consensus emerging on the precise nature of EU involvement.

German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel said the EU

was ready to provide aid and that security would be provided by individual states on a voluntary basis. The Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) should be tasked with coordinating the operation, he said.

France's Hervé De Charette insisted that the EU should take the leading role. "This is Europe's responsibility. The EU must take charge," he said.

Mr. De Charette however did not repeat earlier French demands for the EU to get involved in a broader military mission in Albania, which were strongly resisted by Britain and Germany last weekend.

Britain's Malcolm Rifkind

reiterated his opposition to military intervention.

"There is some evidence the political situation is very, very slowly improving but I think the main concern will be at the humanitarian level, whether there are any immediate requirements of that kind," he said.

Jan D'Ansemhour, the Dutch diplomat who led a fact-finding mission to Albania last week, reported that security, financial and humanitarian aid should be the main areas in which the EU should try to help Albania.

A second mission to Tirana and the appointment of a special European coordinator in the Albanian capital were also being dis-

cussed Monday.

Italy has taken a lead in giving humanitarian aid to the Albanians. On Sunday military helicopters flew two tonnes of hospital equipment into the town of Vlore, in the south of the country and a plane carrying another six tonnes of supplies left for Tirana Monday.

Mr. De Charette warned that failure to act on Albania would be a heavy blow to the credibility of the EU's fledgling common foreign and security policy.

"Tomorrow, we celebrate the 40th anniversary of the treaty of Rome. It would be extremely disappointing if we could not agree on sending aid."

## Storms kill 11 Bangladeshis, injure hundreds

DHAKA (R) — At least 11 people were killed and hundreds injured in storms that lashed the Bangladesh coast and other districts over the weekend, police and officials said Monday.

They said four people, including a teenage girl, were killed in the coastal districts of Barisal and Patuakhali when their thatched houses collapsed Sunday.

In the nearby district of Bhola, two people were killed in a house collapse and two others drowned

when a fishing boat capsized in a river.

Police said a woman and her daughter were killed when their house collapsed in the Rangamati district of the Chittagong Hill Tracts. One person died in northeastern Sylhet district, also when a house collapsed.

Police and officials said hundreds of others were injured as the storms, accompanied by heavy rain, flattened houses and uprooted trees.

Storms destroyed around

250 houses in the Chittagong and Rangamati districts, and flattened a large camp for Burmese refugees in nearby Cox's Bazar.

Strong winds also uprooted electric and telephone poles, disrupting power and telecommunications in some areas.

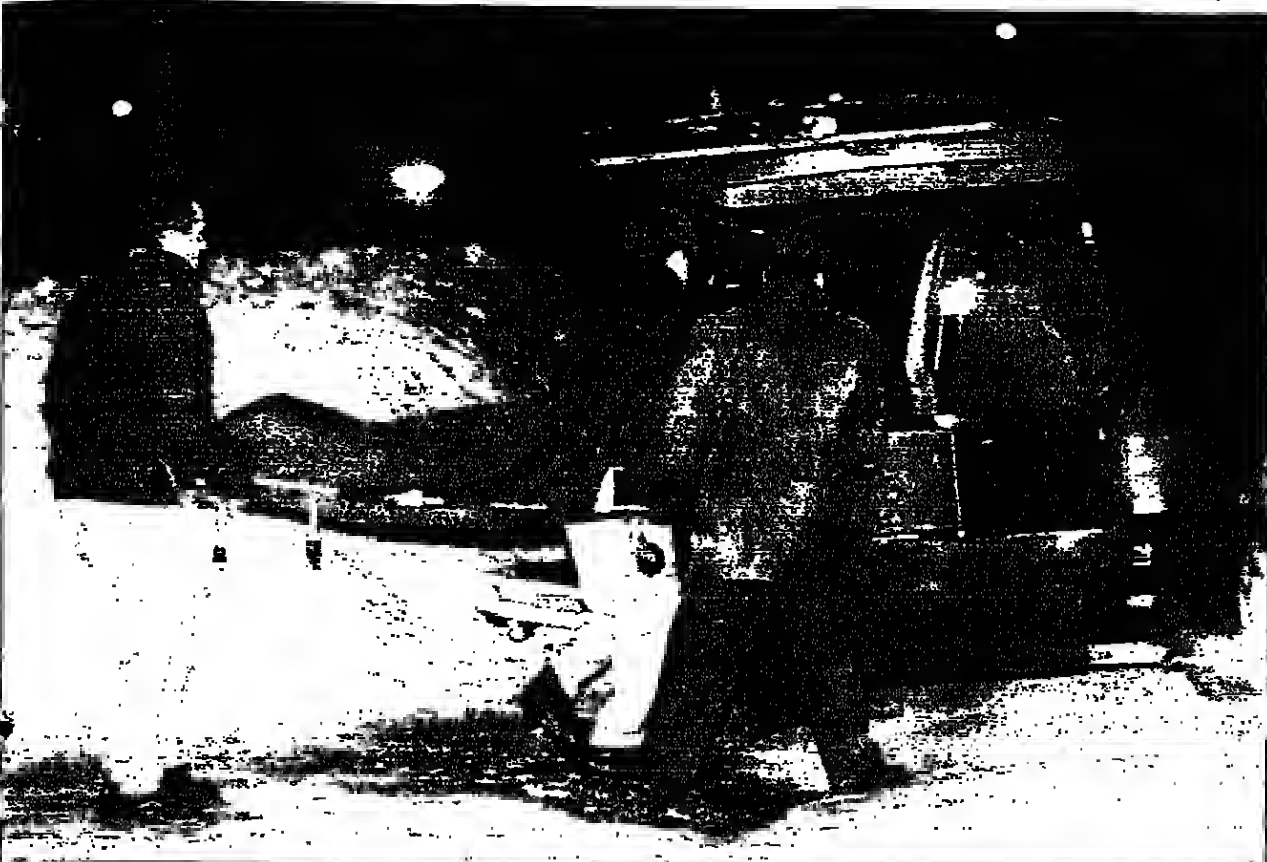
Three ships were damaged in the Bay of Bengal when a storm with winds of up to 124 kilometres per hour struck Bangladesh's main port city of Chittagong early Sunday, port

officials said. A Singapore-flagged container ship, Kota Berjaya, broke loose from its mooring and struck the Banglar Kallol, a Bangladeshi ship, from the rear, port officials said.

They said Banglar Kiron, another Bangladeshi ship, slammed into a stone wall on the Karnaphuli Channel.

Police said an unknown number of fishing boats were missing after the storm hit without warning from weather officials.





The body of a member of the Order of the Solar Temple is removed from a burnt house in St. Casimir some 37 miles west of Quebec City. Five people were found dead in a mysterious blaze at a house owned by a doomsday cult involved in a string of suicides and murders (Reuters photo)

## Swiss authorities contact Solar Temple members

ZURICH (R) — Swiss police began contacting Solar Temple members in Switzerland after five members of the doomsday cult died in a blazing house in Canada in an apparent ritual suicide pact, authorities said Monday.

Fribourg Cantonal Police said in a statement that as of late Sunday they had contacted two-thirds of the persons in Switzerland associated with the cult and were still trying to reach the rest of those on their list.

They said there was no evidence of a similar disaster in Switzerland and they planned no further statements.

Switzerland was the scene

of what authorities believe was a mass ritual murder linked to the cult in 1994.

The Swiss News Agency (SDA) reported that authorities in the cantons of Geneva and Vaud were undertaking similar measures and police in France and Belgium were also taking action.

Police in Saint Casimir, Quebec, Saturday night found the charred bodies of three women and two men inside a house owned by a member of the Solar Temple, an international sect which believes death by ritualised suicide leads to rebirth in a place called "Sirius."

Police identified the dead

as two French women, two Swiss men and a Canadian woman and said they included the house owner, his wife and her mother.

In 1994 and 1995, 69 Solar Temple cult members died in suspicious circumstances in fires in Switzerland and Quebec.

On Oct. 5, 1994, police found 23 bodies in a burning farmhouse in the village of Cheiry near the central Swiss city of Fribourg.

Another 25 charred corpses were found in three chalets in the village of Granges-Sur-Salvan, about 100 kilometres to the south in the Valais Canton.

Canadian police discovered five more bodies, including that of a three-month-old baby, at the Quebec resort of Morin Heights later that day.

Andre Pillar, the Fribourg magistrate who led Swiss inquiries into the deaths, said in his final report last April that he thought all but 15 of the 53 victims in Switzerland had been murdered with guns or poison or by asphyxiation.

The victims were mainly Swiss and French, but included Canadians, Belgians and a Spaniard. Sixteen members of the Solar Temple, half of whom were Swiss, died in an outdoor murder-suicide in south-eastern France in December 1995.

luding that of a three-month-old baby, at the Quebec resort of Morin Heights later that day.

## Gingrich kicks off Asian tour in South Korea

SEOUL (R) — U.S. House of Representatives Speaker Newt Gingrich arrived in South Korea Monday for a three-day visit expected to focus on North Korea and thorny trade issues.

Mr. Gingrich and 11 congressmen will visit the heavily-fortified demilitarised zone that divides the Korean peninsula and meet President Kim Young-Sam.

South Korea is their first stop on an Asian tour that will also take them to China, Japan, Hong Kong and Taiwan.

But their visit to Seoul has been overshadowed by a domestic corruption scandal that has engulfed Mr. Kim and his counterparts in the National Assembly.

"He has picked the wrong time to come to Korea," said Moon Jung-In, a politics professor at Seoul's Yonsei University.

Mr. Moon said Mr. Gingrich and his entourage were

likely to get a cool reception to any pressure on South Korea to open wider its markets to U.S. goods and services.

"Korea is embroiled in a domestic battle and President Kim Young-Sam is entering a lame-duck stage," he said. "It's not a good time to pressure South Korea to open its markets."

Mr. Kim is battling to limit the damage from a bribery scandal surrounding the collapse of a steelmaker in January under \$5.8 billion in debts. Ten people, including three of Mr. Kim's close aides, are now on trial.

The scandal has rocked South Korea and added strains to an economy sagging under a huge trade deficit.

U.S. businesses complain that Seoul is trying to cut its deficit with a campaign against luxury spending aimed at Western imports,

such as cars and spirits.

Mr. Gingrich is the first of a slew of U.S. visitors, including Vice-President Al Gore, scheduled to arrive this week.

Mr. Gore is likely to try to convince Seoul to be more flexible in dealing with North Korea, where famine is looming, political analysts said. But the analysts said he would meet resistance.

The United States and South Korea are waiting for North Korea to respond to an offer for four-way talks, also including China, aimed at securing a peace mechanism to replace a truce that ended the 1950-53 Korean war.

The talks were proposed by U.S. President Bill Clinton and President Kim last April.

Many South Koreans fear Washington will give in too easily to North Korean demands for food as the price

for peace.

"In dealing with North Korea, the U.S. has always been the driver and South Korea in the back seat," said Kang Sung-Hack, a professor of political science at Korea University.

He said that while Washington dangled the prospect of food aid to bring North Korea out of its isolation, Seoul worried it would have to pick up the tab.

"This is an election year and a lot of conservative voters are still against supplying too much aid to North Korea," said Kim Sung-Han, a professor at the Institute of Foreign Affairs and National Security.

Cho Yong-Kyun, also a professor at the institute, which acts as a Foreign Ministry think-tank, said the U.S. visitors were expected to press South Korea most forcefully on opening its lucrative car and telecommunications markets.

## Dalai Lama holds out olive branch to China

TAIPEI (AFP) — The Dalai Lama Monday extended an olive branch to China, urging it to hold talks on Tibet and warning that otherwise Tibetan Buddhist culture was in danger of extinction.

"Until some degree of freedom or autonomy materialises, sooner or later Tibetan Buddhist culture will die. This is not party politics, or power politics," the exiled Tibetan leader told a packed press conference in Taipei.

He repeated an offer to Beijing to sit down and talk without any pre-conditions to try to reach an agreed solution on his homeland, which he fled in 1959 when Chinese troops brutally suppressed an uprising against eight years of Chinese rule.

The offer was first made

in 1987 as part of a five-point plan, but so far there has been no official response from China.

Instead, Beijing has continued to treat the spiritual leader as one of its biggest foes, along with Taiwan, which separated from the mainland in 1949 after a bitter civil war.

China is seething at the Dalai Lama's current six-day trip to Taiwan which began Saturday, accusing him of colluding with Taiwan leaders to divide the motherland.

A Taiwan newspaper, the United Daily News, said Monday that the People's Liberation Army (PLA) was planning to hold war games in southeast China next month in a move which may be related to the Dalai Lama's visit.

However the report was denied by a Chinese Defence Ministry spokesman who said: "I'm not aware of any such manoeuvres or plans."

The Dalai Lama reacted strongly to Beijing's accusations that his trip to Taiwan was a conspiracy, and told reporters he had informed the Chinese government well in advance.

"My position is clear. I am not seeking independence although Tibet is historically a separate country," he said, adding that he was seeking genuine autonomy, and dismissing notions that he was a separatist.

"My main concern is not just the political status — self-rule, autonomy or independence. I do not consider

this the most important thing. The most important thing is the preservation of Tibetan Buddhist culture," he added.

Since the 1959 abortive uprising the Tibetan government in exile has been based in northern India, and the Dalai Lama's trip to Taiwan marks the first time in about 40 years that he has visited a Chinese society.

The Dalai Lama repeated his vow to resign as the political leader of Tibet once his exiled government returns home, in order to allow free elections to take place.

"As soon as we return to Tibet I will resign" as political head, he said, adding "the head of the local government should be an elected official."

## Night of stars, parties ahead for Hollywood

LOS ANGELES (R) — Lights ... And ... Action. Hollywood was ready Monday for its big Oscars show followed by an endless night of partying.

Four 20-foot tall replicas of the Oscar statue stood guard at the doors of the Shrine Auditorium to welcome the stars and the Hollywood power elite for the 69th annual Academy Awards.

A thousand movie fans who got seats in the bleachers outside were armed with cameras to snap their favourites who were to stride along the red carpet in the California sun.

"I slept on the concrete," said one fan, Kenan Jones, who had camped out for two nights. "It hurt bad, but it was worth it," he said, as carpenters hammered the final nails into stage and scenery and electricians adjusted lights for the night when Hollywood outdoes even itself with extravagance.

This is the night the movie-making capital of the world puts on a show — and what a dazzling sight with \$140 million worth of diamonds donated by an international jeweller and destined for the necks, wrists and earlobes of the famous — at least just for Oscar night.

In addition, the world's biggest-name designers have been knocking each other over to entice the stars to wear their gowns and tuxedos.

And after the show, it's party time as studios hoped to attract the rich and famous to their post-Oscar bash.

Apart from the traditional "Governor's Ball" for 1,650 guests, Elton John's AIDS benefit party was expected to be the hottest ticket in town. An added attraction for the British singer this year is that he turns 50 the following day.

## U.S.-Belarus row hots up with expulsion of U.S. diplomat

MINSK (AFP) — The United States lodged a strong protest Monday over the expulsion of one of its diplomats from Belarus after he was arrested at an opposition protest and accused of working for the CIA.

The expulsion was the latest round in a growing row between Minsk and Washington.

On Friday, the United States suspended \$40 million in aid to Belarus because of what it called human rights violations under President Alexander Lukashenko, who has forced through constitutional changes to amass huge powers.

The diplomat, briefly detained at a banned opposition protest Sunday, "has been declared persona non grata and given 24 hours to leave the country," Belarus Security Council Secretary Vasil Baranov told AFP.

"The American diplomat is a CIA agent," he said, referring to the Central Intelligence Agency.

Belarusian authorities identified the expelled diplomat as Serge Alexandrov, first secretary at the embassy.

A U.S. embassy spokesman said a "strong protest" had been made by the U.S. ambassador in Minsk to the authorities and that "the highest levels of the state department in Washington have been informed."

The diplomat was "unjustly and illegally detained by Belarusian authorities while carrying out normal diplomatic functions entirely in keeping with his diplomatic duties," the spokesman said.

"The allegations were totally groundless," he said.

The spokesman confirmed that the diplomat had been expelled. "I think he will leave today," he said.

The embassy said it could not confirm the identity of the diplomat and could not "confirm or deny he was in any way or form involved with the opposition" protest.

About 10,000 opposition supporters marched through central Minsk on their way to a rally marking the 79th anniversary of the founding in 1918 of the short-lived Belarus Republic, later forcibly incorporated into the

Soviet Union.

According to the police, 81 people were arrested during the march and 63 charged with violating public order, which carries a maximum sentence of 15 days imprisonment or a fine.

Two of those arrested were leaders of the main opposition party, the Belarus Popular Front, which organised the protest. Interfax reported.

A popular front source said that more than 100 people may have been detained. It was not clear at what point the U.S. diplomat was arrested.

Clashes left 11 policemen injured, two hospitalised, a police spokesman said.

Popular Front Deputy Chairman Vintsuk Vichorko called the diplomat's arrest and expulsion "a new stage of anti-Western hysteria."

Mr. Vichorko told reporters his party had no links with the diplomat, but "it's completely normal that a diplomat in a country observes events."

"This is another anti-Western spectacle," party member Vyacheslav Sivchuk

said.

Popular Front officials said one of those arrested was a 24-year-old man who was hospitalised in intensive care after police held him for hours without allowing him treatment for diabetes.

Mr. Lukashenko acquired sweeping new powers in a controversial referendum on Nov. 24 last year and disbanded the former parliament, replacing it with an assembly staffed with loyal deputies.

Under the new constitution, he has the right to dissolve parliament, veto its decisions, and hire and fire the heads of key bodies including the constitutional court, the Supreme Court and the Central Bank.

On March 6 he imposed restrictions on the right to demonstrate, banning slogans which "humiliate the authorities," along with the red-and-white independence flag, which he replaced with the republic's former Soviet-era flag.

One of Mr. Lukashenko's main goals is to create a union between Belarus and Russia.

## Thousands displaced by Afghan fighting

KABUL (AFP) — Tens of thousands of civilians have been displaced by heavy fighting in the northwest Afghan province of Badghis, Red Cross officials told AFP Monday.

Battles between the Islamic Taleban militia and non-therm-based opposition forces in the isolated area have sent nearly 20,000 people fleeing to safer areas of the country, a spokesman for the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) said here.

"We are now evaluating the situation of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Herat who fled Badghis because of the military situation," Jean-Luc Paladini stated.

He said the IDPs had settled in the neighbouring province of Herat because of the escalating war between the Taleban forces and troops loyal to northern warlord General Abdul Ra-shid Dostum, who is allied with ousted Herat Governor Ismael Khan.

"These IDPs are in deep need of housing, food and water," Mr. Paladini said.

"ICRC should implement a special assistance programme for them in the next week," he added.

Mr. Paladini stressed that the ICRC-assisted Afghans from Badghis did not represent the full number of IDPs who have sought refuge in Herat — they were just the "most needy" according to Red Cross criteria.

Other IDPs from Badghis are staying with relatives in Herat, while the United Nations also administers camps for a further 2,700 displaced families. Aid agencies calculate that each family contains around seven people.

Mr. Paladini said an additional 6,000 IDP families were currently on a 168-kilometre westward march from the Badghis capital of Qala-i-Naw to Herat city, which is under Taleban control.

The Taleban appear to be under threat in Qala-i-Naw from the joint opposition forces.

Qala-i-Naw, now basically a garrison town, has reportedly been heavily reinforced with Taleban fighters in anticipation of an opposition assault.

Taleban press spokesman Mullah Amir Shah Mut-taqi, the acting minister of culture and information, has repeatedly denied any military advance by opposition forces in Badghis.

## Sri Lanka Navy destroys Tiger flotilla; toll hits 100

COLOMBO (AFP) — Up to 100 Tamil rebels were killed when the Sri Lankan Navy sank a dozen Tiger guerrilla craft during a fierce sea battle Monday, the Defence Ministry here said in a statement.

The fighting broke out when the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) mounted a ferocious assault on a routine navy patrol about 25 kilometres off the coast of northeastern Mullaitivu town, the ministry said.

"At least 80 to 100 terrorists were killed and 50 to 70 were wounded during the confrontation," the ministry statement said, adding one navy sailor was also killed and eight others wounded.

A Defence Ministry spokesman said 12 rebel boats, including two manned by suicide cadres known as Black Sea Tigers,

were destroyed while another 10 were damaged by the navy.

Defence sources said the navy sent reinforcements to the area and were successful in beating off the rebel onslaught which was led by two boats packed with explosives and four Black Sea Tigers.

The attack was coordinated by a navy mothership, the Parakramabahu, and a total of six gun boats were involved in the fighting, the sources said, adding there was minor damage to the navy craft.

The navy patrol was moving from the northeastern port of Trincomalee towards the peninsula of Jaffna when it was attacked, the sources said.

There was no immediate word from the LTTE about the latest confrontation.

Last week, security forces carried out raids over Mullaitivu and also used the navy to pound coastal bases of the LTTE's naval unit known as the Sea Tigers.

An air force helicopter gunship disappeared near Mullaitivu Wednesday with eight people, including two Russians, on board. Tiger guerrillas are believed to have shot down the aircraft.

The LTTE has located its military as well as political headquarters in Mullaitivu after losing the former bastion of Jaffna in the north of the country to security forces earlier last year.

The Tigers are leading a drawn-out campaign for independence in the north-east where the two million Tamil minority is concentrated.

More than 50,000 people have been killed in bitter fighting in the past 24 years.

## 11 people massacred in Indian state

NEW DELHI (AFP) — Eleven villagers were shot dead and one seriously injured by a militia of upper-caste landowners in the northern Indian state of Bihar, domestic news agencies reported Monday.

About 100 armed members of the outlawed Ranvir Sena militia opened fire on lower caste villagers in Kab, a Maoist Bastion near the state capital Patna Sunday night, police said.

The United Nations of India (UN), quoting police officials, said the 11 died on the spot while another person was critically injured in the late night attack.

"The killings are a sequel to the ongoing war between the two groups to claim supremacy in the region," official sources told UN.

The Press Trust of India

(PTI) said the state Chief Minister Laloo Prasad Yadav and senior police officials had rushed to the Kab village.

Political leaders in the state, meanwhile, demanded a judicial inquiry into the massacre and asked Mr. Yadav to resign accepting "moral responsibility" for the killings.

Vijay Shanker Mishra, vice-president of the state's Congress (I) party accused the state administration of "failing miserably in controlling the law and order."

"There is an urgent need to disband the private armies and Mr. Yadav should resign."

The shadowy Ranvir Sena is one of the most powerful of Bihar's half-dozen private armies and is believed to have thousands of upper-caste Hindu youths on its rolls.

Bihar is prone to caste conflict and clashes between private militias operated by upper-caste feudal landlords and Maoist guerrillas have left more than 200 people dead over the past two years.

"The situation in the Kab village is tense," a police spokesman said. "We are conducting search operations in the village to nab the killers."

Maoist insurgents have been waging an armed campaign in Bihar for more than two decades to rescue poor farmers in the state from virtual bondage by rich landowners.

Twenty low-caste Hindu villagers, mostly women and children, were killed by Ranvir Sena militants in July a year ago in the state.

## Indian PM vows to punish Hindu killers in Kashmir

NEW DELHI (AFP) — Indian Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda Monday vowed to punish attackers who gunned down seven Hindus in Kashmir, as protests over the massacre swept parts of the Himalayan state.

Mr. Deve Gowda, before leaving for a three-day visit to Russia, also warned Pakistan that India will not tolerate terrorist violence in the northern frontier state.

"The perpetrators of this act of terror shall not escape the consequences of their horrible crime," the prime minister said of the pre-dawn massacre in Kashmir Saturday.

"Their masters abroad,

who aid and abet cross-border terrorism, should understand the entire Indian nation stands together in defence of its territorial integrity and secular unity," he said without naming Pakistan.

"All (Indian) communities and states are one in the defence of these values," Mr. Deve Gowda added.

Ten suspected Muslim militants with AK-47 assault rifles stormed Sangram Pura village, 30 kilometres north of Srinagar, early Saturday and ordered eight men out of their homes.

The screaming Hindus were marched to a field, ordered to line up and gunned down. Seven men died instantly, but a student, Ashok

Pandit, survived. The dead included two brothers and a father and son.

"The restoration of a democratic government in Kashmir has opened a new chapter and defeated the designs of the terrorists and their masters abroad," Mr. Deve Gowda said.

News agencies said a pro-Indian Muslim militant group called a general strike Monday over the massacre, and shut down businesses in the southern Kashmiri district of Anantnag.

Shops, offices and banks were closed and there was no traffic on the streets after the Ikhwani group of former guerrilla fighters called for a one-day strike, the agencies said.



## Jordan Times

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## Halting peace process?

ISRAELI PRIME Minister Benjamin Netanyahu says that the peace talks with the Palestinians are not suspended despite the conditions he wants the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) to meet, which virtually make a resumption of the peace talks near impossible. Mr. Netanyahu's conditions appear to be meant to halt the peace process with the Palestinians altogether — an objective that now seems to top his and his coalition partners' agenda. By doing so, Mr. Netanyahu apparently wants to achieve two goals: one, to satisfy his coalition partners, and two, to send signals to the outside world that the peace talks with the Palestinians are still going on despite all recent events.

What lends credence to this assumption is that most, if not all, of the Israeli conditions have already been met by the PNA ever since the two sides started cooperating on security measures. The list of six conditions, for example, calls on the PNA to "tighten its cooperation with Israel in the area of security." The fact though is that the different Palestinian security organisations have been fully cooperating with the Israelis to the extent that some Palestinian circles accuse their own security forces of becoming subservient to the Israelis.

On the other hand, the Israelis cannot accuse the PNA of waging a hostile propaganda against them since the Palestinians are only reacting to Israeli intransigence, and to the building of settlements. Israel should not expect the Palestinians not to sound the alarm against Israeli policies and actions that endanger the peace process. If at this stage of peace Israel demands the Palestinians to meet some conditions, then there is nothing that prevents the PNA from putting forward its own. Top of these is an immediate end to all Israeli measures that aim to preempt the results of the final status talks. Since Israel is now prepared to speed up these final status negotiations, there can be no pressing reason for it to predetermine them by its deeds. Israel should realise that it is not the Palestinians who bear the responsibility for terrorism. Rather it is Israel's determined efforts to foreclose the shape and form of the final stages of negotiation which are pushing the parties closer than ever to "the edge of an abyss." Cooperating with Israel on the six security-related conditions is not, therefore, the essence of the conflict. More fundamental, political related issues are what at stake at this stage of the negotiating process.

## ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

BEFORE AND after the Tel Aviv blast, the Israelis were blaming Yasser Arafat and the Palestinian National Authority for resistance activity which they call acts of terrorism against Israeli targets, said Salah Jarar, a writer for Al Rai. Mr. Arafat has done all in his power to ensure security, and no acts of terrorism have been launched from territory under his control, but the Tel Aviv blast and others like it came from areas still under occupation, according to the writer. He said if Israel's formidable military power could not prevent the blast, how can Mr. Netanyahu expect from the newly established Palestinian National Authority, with its meagre resources and power, to ensure security for Israel, asked the writer. Mr. Netanyahu has been demanding that Mr. Arafat prevent any resistance activity at a time when Israel maintains its repressive measures, provoking the Palestinians into committing such activity to secure their freedom, added the writer. He asked how the Palestinian National Authority can prevent oppressed Palestinians from committing suicide attacks when this authority's hands are tied and facing Israel's illegal measures and the construction of Jewish settlements, in defiance of the Palestinian people. The only way to prevent further bloodshed, he said, is a total Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Arab lands.

A WRITER for Al Majd weekly discussed the question of foreign nurses' employment in Jordan and said the time has come for disposing of non-Jordanian workers in various fields, now that Jordanians face a rising rate of unemployment. Youssef Azmi said the private hospitals are teeming with non-Jordanian nurses, estimated at 2,000, while many graduates from Jordanian nursing schools are looking for jobs. The writer said that the owners of private hospitals have been employing foreign nurses under the pretext that they have good experience, but after the establishment of nursing schools, Jordan has been graduating great number of qualified and trained nurses who can easily fill the place of the guest nurses. The time has come for the government to look into this important issue and help end this awkward situation, and, in the process, save the country a fortune in hard currency spent on foreign nurses and give jobs to the Jordanian nurses, said the writer. The nurses association, he said, should take up this vital matter with the Ministry of Labour and undertake the task of finding jobs for Jordanian nurses, said the writer, adding that this is not only a professional mission but also a national duty.

## The View from Fourth Circle

## Palestine, China and other illusions in the lands of Semites

By Rami G. Khouri

THINGS ARE not always as they appear to be in our Middle Eastern world of the Semites — both Arabs and Israelis — as this week proves yet again, in several different spheres.

1) The belief that terror threatens the peace process is once again being shown to be untrue, and a reflection of emotional fears rather than political actuality. In fact, terror and violence by both sides since the early 1980s have always — and I stress always — speeded up the peace process, rather than retarded it, especially since the 1993 Oslo accord. We have experienced many acts of violence in recent years that either deliberately aimed to stop the peace process or threatened such an outcome by stressing the security and national needs of only one side — the most noteworthy and ugly were the bus and suicide bombings in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin, the Israeli war in Lebanon and the Cana massacre in April 1996, the two separate killings of Palestinians in Hebron by Israeli gunmen, the killing of Israeli schoolgirls in Baqoura earlier this month, the fighting after the opening of the tunnel in Jerusalem last year and the latest Israeli construction on east Jerusalem lands that are subject to negotiation in the final status talks.

After every one of these incidents tensions and fears rose sharply, the peace process paused momentarily, grave warnings were issued by both sides, our television screens were full of frowning politicians... and then, about two to three weeks later in every instance — magically, perhaps, in this land of miracles — we witnessed not only a resumption of the peace talks, but also a heightened sense of urgency. The reason for this is clear: the violence is not an inevitable herald of the future, but a frightening reminder of what has been suffered in the past. The violence this month — whether political violence by the Israeli government against Arab rights in Jerusalem or physical violence by lone Palestinians and Jordanians against Israeli civilians — reaffirms two simultaneous facts: the proven and utter failure of violence as a means of resolving our conflict, but the ironic and repeated efficacy of violence as a means of speeding up the political negotiations. Mr. Netanyahu's sudden call to move quickly to the final status negotiations is probably the latest and best available sign of this fact.

2. The idea that the Oslo process' gradualist approach leads to incremental trust between Palestinians and Israelis is proving leaky, if not totally outdated and irrelevant. The

completion of the easy first stages of Oslo and today's sudden focus on the central issues of the conflict — land, sovereignty, national and refugee rights, and the sum total of all these in the symbol of Jerusalem — has sparked maximalist demands from both sides. The constructive ambiguity of the Oslo process is no longer a positive factor, but has become a great burden and a frightening sword over the head and land of each side. Building trust is no longer the primary aim of the peace process; the primary aim must now be to partition the land, enjoy parallel, contiguous and equal sovereignties in Israel and Palestine, and then work for longer term, people-to-people trust and reconciliation from a foundation of shared dignity and security.

3. The slogan that Mr. Netanyahu and his right-wing government will bring both peace and security to the Jewish people is proving comical, often in a tragic way. Netanyahu's oddball government coalition has alienated almost every possible Arab and international partner for peace that Israel had cultivated since the Madrid talks in 1991; it has seriously undermined Arab support for peace and maintained a real sense of insecurity among Israelis. Palestine is not China; Bibi Netanyahu is not Richard Nixon.

4. Mr. Netanyahu's promise to Israelis this week that he would never withdraw from Judea, Samaria and Gaza or accept a Palestinian state is good news for the Palestinians, because it almost certainly means that he is preparing to withdraw from the West Bank and Gaza and accept the reality of a Palestinian state. The stark fact of modern history, since the 1970s, is that every major pledge by an Israeli leader about what Israel would or would not do in peace making with the Arabs has been unceremoniously broken and forgotten — from Moshe Dayan's pledge never to leave the Sinai, to Menachem Begin's pledge never to uproot Israeli settlements, to Yitzhak Rabin's pledge never to leave the Golan Heights, to every Israeli prime minister's pledge never to recognise or negotiate with the PLO, to Bibi Netanyahu's pledge never to shake Yasser Arafat's hand, among others.

The hard-line statements of Israeli leaders tend to conceal the more pragmatic, moderate position of the Israeli public — as we already see, for example, on the questions of settlements, withdrawal from the Golan Heights or sharing Jerusalem among Israelis and Palestinians in a manner that satisfies both sides' desperate yet real needs

for symbols and sovereignties in the holy city. Similarly, the Palestinian demands for substantial Israeli withdrawals from occupied Palestinian lands reflect the widespread Arab desire to implement the full promise of the peace process, rather than to bring it to an end. What leaders say in public are opening negotiating positions; what they do at the negotiations is very different, as recent time has proven over and over.

5. Palestinian and Israeli political leaders both threaten to stop the peace talks, but both are lying through their teeth. They will slow down but never stop the peace process because they know that the end of the peace process will also be the end of their political incumbencies and perhaps their careers. Both sides repeatedly threaten to break off peace talks because they know that this is the worst thing they could do to the other side. Why? Because they both know that the most cherished goal of the other side, as of their own side, is to make the peace process work and succeed. The mutual threat to stop the peace process is not a sign of the process' vulnerability, but rather of its strength, durability and importance to both sides. This is why the process has endured and survived the many violent attempts by crazed killers on either side to bring it to an end.

If these points highlight the underlying strength of the peace process, they should also alert us to its more obvious weaknesses. These weaknesses are partly due to the vague nature of the Oslo process, partly to the imbalance in power between Israelis and Palestinians, partly to real fears facing both peoples, and partly to the amateurish conduct of Israeli and Palestinian political leaders. The antidote to all four of these deficiencies is not the end of the negotiations, but rather their rejuvenation on a more realistic and balanced basis that reflects both the shared morality of Arabs and Israelis and the initial promise of the Oslo process: sharing the land of Palestine and Israel in two adjacent, equal and peaceful states.

To reach this point, we are well advised to do two things this week: act according to our minds more than our guts, and ignore just about every single statement uttered by a Semitic political leader in Israel and Palestine — these magical and mystical lands whose history is blessed by the sanctity of God's many genuine prophets, but also ridiculed by the cruel comedy of a much larger number of false prophets.

## Dying gasp of fortress Israel?

By Susan Bellos

The writer is a Jerusalem journalist. The article below is reprinted from The Jerusalem Post.

I WAS always mystified by that fascinating piece of Newspeak — "United Jerusalem," or, even, more strangely, "liberated" Jerusalem. As far as I know, only people can be united, as some degree of mutual consent is needed.

Stones, walls and apartment blocks, on the other hand, which can hardly take part in a conversation, tend to get annexed. In Berlin, for example, after the wall was torn down, though hardly liberated, the people from the two sides were actually united, essentially because they were the same people, and often the same kin.

Unlike some people declaring their eternal loyalty to undivided Jerusalem these days, I was actually there when walls were knocked down and two very distinct peoples were brought face to face with one another. I also lived for some years in divided Jerusalem, and though I may have mixed in the wrong circles, I never heard anyone declaring that his right hand might be torn asunder, or that he couldn't live without East Jerusalem.

Jerusalem in my heady youth of 1963 was fun. In spite of snide remarks from Tel Avivians comparing Jerusalem's night life to that of an old age home, there was a vivid student life centred around the Innorinal, and quite respectable. Bacchus Club off Zion Square.

There was also a vigorous intellectual life at the then handsome Hebrew University campus at Givat Ram and the challenge of the spanking new Hadassah Hospital in Ein Karem.

There was no kulturkampf between secular and religious Jews, who got on relatively harmoniously, each minding their own business. You didn't have to endure videos of your host's trip to the Far East or Alaska either, and red wine and olive oil were dead cheap.

I don't mean to blather on in some middle-aged way about Paradise Lost. Pre-1967 Jerusalem also meant living with rampant prejudice against non-Ashkenazi Jews, and a totally party-politicised press that had no interest whatsoever in issues like police brutality, since it didn't actually involve their friends and relations.

Women teachers were routinely addressed as "girls" by their male superiors, the food

was generally ghastly, and The Jerusalem Post was as stodgy as last week's snot pud.

However, people seemed perfectly comfortable with the idea of East Jerusalem — then about as remote as the other side of the moon — as some vaguely irrelevant Arab place. The only exception to this I ever witnessed was when a group of haredi Jews came to visit Abu Tor on Tisha Be'Av in order to try and get a pitiful glimpse of the Western Wall.

In June 1967 I saw the walls near the municipality bulldozed in order to "liberate" the hemused residents of the Vaikan property behind Notre Dame.

It was all so surreal that my friend Hanna nuzzled about one day in a liberated street in her perfect English: "I wonder what it actually feels like on the other side." A voice just behind us chimed back in equally perfect English tones: "It feels awful, if you really want to know."

**"Har Homa is hopefully the dying shudder of an antiquated and discredited fortress mentality. Modern warfare, which can involve mass murder of civilians thousands of miles away, is so dangerous that no building can ever justify it."**

Nevertheless, I and everybody else I knew enjoyed the fiesta-like atmosphere of the "unification." The Old City was a delight, and we soon made friends with people like Samira and her brother Marwan. Visits and meals were exchanged until Samira fell out with me because I had moved into the new Ramot Eshkol neighbourhood right next to the police hostel, which gave her the creeps. I fell out with Samira because she attempted to present me with a puppy when my children were aged two and three.

As the years went by, I continued and continue to enjoy East Jerusalem, even though I miss Samira and Marwan. Whenever I hunger for top-quality Armenian ceramics or Significant Other has an urgent need for the freshest fasoulia, we nip off to East Jerusalem. But we visit

essentially as tourists, since we have no friends, relations or common heritage in East Jerusalem.

I write this as the bulldozers are poised to build yet another Jewish neighbourhood in East Jerusalem.

Although the Labour Party has slanted the Likud for the "unification" of the Har Homa decision (the subject of their attack being basically: We did the same as you, but we're smarter), both of them are exhibiting a fortress mentality which finally went out of the window with the Gulf war.

Israelis, crouched around their TV sets in small rooms sealed up with sticky tape, learned to their horror that rings of Jewish suburbs are not much use against long-range missiles. Beyond a spurious security argument lies the line that we should build there because we have the legal right to do so.

However, the fact that some Israeli land developers bought up some land in Har Homa does not give anybody an excuse to wreck the peace process.

The simple truth is that if most ordinary Israelis and Palestinians neither know nor care about the legal niceties of the Oslo agreement, they understand its spirit very well. Israelis like me want to get on a bus without being afraid of being blown to bits, and Palestinians like Samira understand peace to mean no more settlement, or what they see as land-grabbing, under their noses.

Har Homa is hopefully the dying shudder of an antiquated and discredited fortress mentality. Modern warfare, which can involve mass murder of civilians thousands of miles away, is so dangerous that no building can ever justify it.

That brings me back to disunited Jerusalem. We remain two very separate peoples who are not very keen about mingling.

The only thing that unites most Jerusalemites — Jewish, Muslim and Christian — is a common desire for peace and quiet.

There is no excuse for Israel to continue lording it over East Jerusalem if there is the slightest chance that our withdrawal will lead to the rolling up of the map of war in Gaza, Cairo, Damascus or Amman.

Of course the Western Wall, and access to it, is deeply precious to the Jewish people. However, as any Orthodox Jew will tell you, the preservation of human life is the greatest mitzva of them all.

## LETTERS

## Growing fond of war?

To the Editor:

"IT IS well that war is so terrible, or we should grow too fond of it!"

Spoken by U.S. General Robert E. Lee over a hundred years ago, this observation seems to have fallen on deaf ears among today's Israeli and Palestinian leaders.

As the tension escalates over the Har Homa issue and the extent of Israel's redeployment during the first phase of withdrawal, the possibility for a fresh outbreak of violence has become more and more likely.

Sadly, the actions taken by both parties over the past couple of weeks reflect the attitude that only through the escalation of inflammatory actions and threats will progress be made at the negotiating table.

Neither side seems to take into consideration the real possibility that this strategy could blow up in both their faces.

Take, for instance, Palestinian leaders' statements regarding what will occur once the Israeli bulldozers begin clearing the land for development on Har Homa. Does anyone really believe that in the climate we are now living under the Palestinian reaction will be peaceful?

Furthermore, as if to add fuel to the fire, the Israeli government announced its intention to close four offices in Jerusalem that it claims have ties to the Palestinian National Authority (PNA).

The announcement of Israel's intent to close the offices came on the heels of the decision to go ahead with housing construction on Har Homa.

Whether this decision was carried out due to a clear lack of sensitivity on the part of the Israeli government towards

growing Palestinian (and Arab) resentment of its handling of the peace process or it was part of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's attempt to placate his own coalition partners' frustration over his continuing the first phase of redeployment without Palestinian reciprocity, as called for under the Oslo accords, (e.g., abolishing amendments to the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) covenant which calls for Israel's destruction and the extradition of suspects to face trial in Israel for crimes against Israeli citizens) — remains to be seen.

Perhaps the Palestinians feel that violence at this stage, with the international community condemning Israel's policies, would bring even more pressure to bear on Netanyahu to offer more concessions.

Even if Arafat believes that the world community is behind him, he needs to consider whether the price the Palestinians will have to pay in blood is worth any additional sympathy he could receive.

For if Arafat thinks that Netanyahu will be more forthcoming following a bloody confrontation which leaves dead and wounded on both sides, he will be bitterly disappointed.

Consequently, there should be no need to keep returning to the option of violence every time the pace of the peace process slows down. After all, war is not something we need to become too acquainted with.

Shannon Gilbert,  
Graduate Student,  
Tel Aviv University.

## Parents' day, perhaps?

To the Editor:

ON MARCH 21, Jordan and the Arab World celebrated "Mother's Day," as has been the tradition for a long time, with the good intention to pay tribute to and reward the mother who "burns herself" to ensure the well-being of her children and the family at large.

I, as a mother, say thank you, but we want more than just sympathy, a good wish, a flower and a nice song as a gesture of reward and recognition.

It is appreciated that the society acknowledges the heavy burden laid on the mothers in the process of bringing up new generations. For this it feels the urge and the responsibility to pay her back and reward her with a bouquet of flowers and a thank you note.

In doing so, the society feels that it has settled its account with mothers.

It is time men's roles in assuming an active role as equal partners in the upbringing of their children, as responsible, caring fathers, were acknowl-

edged as being as important as that of the mothers', and to start sharing some of the very heavy responsibilities laid on the mother.

We want a "Happy Parents' Day," whereby both parents get congratulated for doing their parental jobs equally efficiently.

It is time society started assuming some of its responsibility and relieving women of the heavy burden laid on them for so long. This is crucial at a time when women are expected to participate actively, as equal partners, in the economic life and contribute to the family's as well as the national economic development.

Mothers want what they have been giving everybody else for a long time. They want care, support and equal access to opportunities. They demand respect and as much as they give, they need love.

Najwa Kefaya,  
Amman.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any subject they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication, however, should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld only upon request and under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing. The newspaper is not responsible for the return of unused manuscripts.

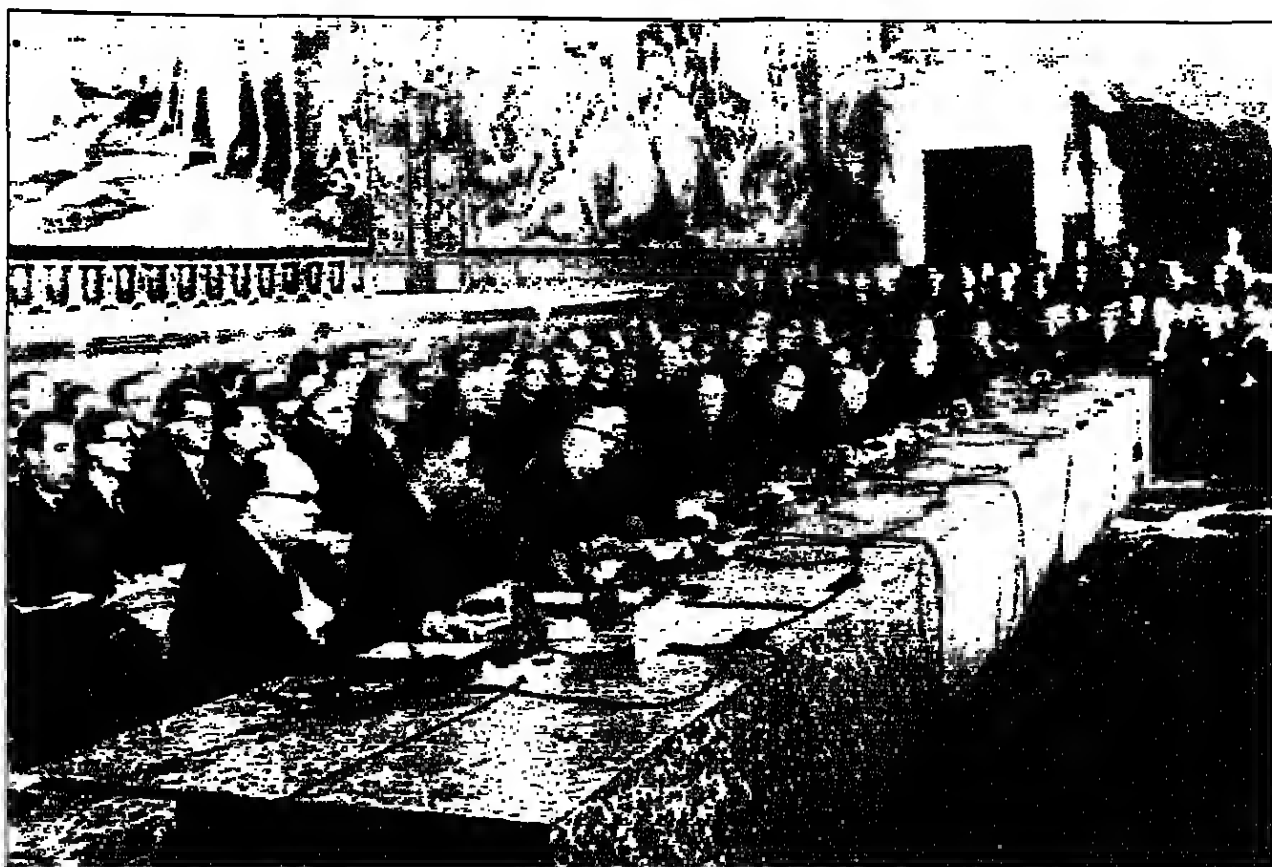


## EU's 40th anniversary of the Treaties of Rome

THE EUROPEAN Union today celebrates one of the most important days in modern European history, the anniversary of the signing of the Treaties of Rome, in 1957, which established the European Economic Community (EEC) and the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom).

Signed by the plenipotentiaries of Belgium, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands, the treaties were the beginnings of European integration and the impetus for a new Europe in which national authorities would complement each other and a gradual transfer of sovereignty to the community level would create independent, democratic European institutions bearing responsibility for joint action in areas such as the single market, monetary policy, economic and social cohesion, as well as foreign and security policy.

In its day, there was an aggressive approach to create an economic community built around the free movement of workers, goods and services, and the six founders wasted no time in fulfilling their vision of an economically united Europe. Customs duties on manufactured goods were abolished in 1968 and an agricultural policy and commercial policy were in place by the close of the decade.



Signing of the Treaties of Rome, March 25, 1957 (Archives photo)

Their success inspired Denmark, Ireland and the United Kingdom to apply for membership which was granted in 1973, followed by the accession of Greece in 1981, Spain and Portugal in 1986 and Austria, Finland and Sweden in 1995. Today, the EC boasts 15 members, with some 10 applications for accession pending.

The treaties' foundations can be attributed to an

effort initiated in 1950 by then French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman who, along with Jean Monnet, forwarded a suggestion that France and Germany pool their coal and steel production under a joint authority within an organisation open to any other European country.

While Robert Schuman and Jean Monnet were very much the "founding fathers" of the Commu-

ty, the Benelux countries together with Konrad Adenauer and Alcide de Gasperi played a vital role in the 1955-56 revival of the process of European integration that was launched in 1950.

The principle applied in the initiative was that peace and security could be wrought from political and economic cooperation if similar interests of European powers — particu-

larly Germany and France — were pooled, thereby allowing nations to cooperate as equals. The Schuman Plan became a reality in April 1951 with the signing of the treaty establishing the European Coal and Steel Community, and set the stage for ensuing cooperation among European countries.

Today, the institutional system of the European Community is difficult to

classify. The EC's mandate exceeds that of an inter-governmental organisation: it carries its own special legal status and extensive powers. It could perhaps be defined as an advanced form of multi-sectoral integration, its competence extending to the economy, industry, policies, citizens' rights, etc...

The task of achieving the goal set forth by the ECSC, the EEC and Euratom now rests with five institutions: the European Parliament, the Council, the Commission, the Court of Justice and the Court of Auditors. The European System of Central Banks and a European Central bank are to be added to the list governing institutions by no later than 1999.

The Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) is reviewing the whole institutional system of the EU, which was originally conceived for a Community of six countries with 160 million inhabitants and today is made up of fifteen countries and will soon be composed of some thirty countries with 460 million people.

European citizens themselves play a vital part in the decision on Europe. On the fortieth anniversary of the signing of the Treaties of Rome they are invited to "build Europe together."

Delegation of the European Commission, Amman

## Randa Habib's corner

### While on top, never forget to look down

YESTERDAY, WHILE I was reading one of my daughter's school books, I found this story that I want to share with you.

Once upon a time, there was a man who lived in a prairie surrounded by high mountains. One day, he dreamt of climbing the peak of a mountain so as to see how it feels on top. His dream turned into an obsession and he dwelt on planning for the ascension. Indeed, he worked hard to realise his trip to the mountain.

And, one day, his dream came true. He reached the top of the mountain and was overwhelmed by a great, thrilling feeling, something he had never experienced before: he realised that he had made the right move. And he quickly felt at home there, to the extent that he forgot all about his old days in the prairie.

As he was sitting on top of the mountain, the dreamer was visited by a sage.

The white-bearded wiseman voiced his happiness for the mountain climber, but he warned him never to forget to look down at his home in the prairie. He advised him to always keep in mind the planning and effort it took him to reach the top. He also warned him of dizziness caused by high places.

Our man listened carefully to the sage and made a promise to himself never to do anything that could jeopardise his new life and the sage's trust.

He enjoyed the fresh air on top of the mountain, but more than anything else he loved being surrounded by so many friends.

His friends seemed to care so much about him. They told him that now that he is on the mountain, he should act like a mountaineer and build new confidence. Why should he look back at the prairie, they asked him. Those days were gone and over.

As time passed, the man, surrounded by his friends, forgot the advice of the wiseman. And one day strong winds started blowing on the mountain. He had a vertigo spell, he could not stand any more, he started falling down. He looked around him for help from his presumed friends, but he found no hand stretched towards him.

## Arafat did not give 'green signal'

(Continued from page 1)

for the blast.

His relatives raised an appeal to the army and to the Israeli supreme court against the destruction order, which was issued a day after the blast, their Israeli lawyer Allegra Pacheco told AFP.

The appeal argued that destroying the house would harm the family and put "13 innocent people out of a home," since Abu Diya's brother Ghazi lives with his family in the same house.

Ms. Pacheco said the demolition would also destroy the family's income, a grocery store on the first floor of the building.

"These demolition orders are discriminatory because Israel does not destroy the

houses of Israelis who kill Palestinians," Ms. Pacheco said.

She said Israeli soldiers had also taken from the family's home car and 10,000 shekels (\$3,000), claiming it had been given to them by Hamas.

In the past, Israel's supreme court has thrown out appeals by families of suicide bombers against the blowing up of their homes. Such collective punishment measures are banned under the 1949 Geneva Convention.

The Israeli army has sealed off Surif and arrested 40 residents of the village since Friday's bombing.

## King and Clinton to meet on April 1

(Continued from page 1)

Prince Hassan stressed Jordan's support for regional cooperation in various fields. Gen. Ralston commended the development of the Jordanian Armed Forces. The meeting was attended by Joint Chiefs-of-Staff Chairman Field Marshal Abdul Hafez Miral and U.S. Ambassador to Jordan Wesley Egan.

The King's meeting with President Clinton on April 1 comes amid a serious crisis in the peace process following an Israeli decision to construct a Jewish settlement in Arab East Jerusalem that has touched off violent Palestinian protests. It was also seen to be behind a suicide blast in Tel Aviv that killed three Israeli women

on Friday.

The situation in Jerusalem was the key theme for a meeting on Sunday of the Organisation of Islamic Conference in Islamabad (see page 12) and will be the key issue at a meeting of the OIC's Jerusalem Committee in Rabat, Morocco, on March 27 and 28.

Deputy Prime Minister for Development and Prime Ministry Affairs Jawad Anani will represent Jordan at the Rabat meeting.

Minister of Transport and Telecommunications Basam Saket will head the Jordanian delegation to the Arab League Council meeting which will be held in Cairo on March 30. The Cairo meeting is also expected to review the situation in the occupied territories.

## Ashrawi assails Israel

(Continued from page 1)

Ms. Ashrawi said the extremism of the Israeli government was feeding extremist elements among her people.

"The peace partnership which we have so painfully sought to build is now being dissolved in favour of a relationship of occupier-occupied."

Israel "forcibly dictates and alters the agenda for final settlement negotiations," she said.

Ms. Ashrawi accused the Israelis of holding hostage more than 3,000 Palestinian prisoners and of bleeding the economy by tightening its strangle-

hold of Palestinian cross-points.

Ms. Ashrawi said Israel was the only country which legislated for torture.

Israeli high court rulings in 1996 lifted injunctions banning the use of force by security forces in the interrogation of detainees.

Ms. Ashrawi said the life of a Palestinian had been devalued to just one-third of a cent, "which is the fine imposed on each of the undercover Israeli agents who murdered a Palestinian."

"Yet, we are being held responsible for the security of every Israeli," she said.

## U.N. teams in place as more food arrives in Iraq

(Continued from page 1)

official said on condition he not be named.

Fifty-two trucks from Turkey arrived at Nineveh, near the northern city of Mosul, between Thursday and Sunday, with almost 1,000 tonnes of chick peas, beans and vegetable oil, with more deliveries expected on Monday.

But the quantity accounts for around only five per cent of the food to be delivered under the two contracts with Turkish firms, U.N. officials said.

More than 2.2 million tonnes of food — flour, rice, sugar, tea, cooking oil, infant milk powder and salt — are to be imported over

six months.

Medicine as well as toilet soap and detergents will also be distributed.

So far 45 humanitarian contracts have been approved by the U.N. Sanctions Committee while more than 200 are pending.

Lloyds of London experts, deployed on Iraq's borders to monitor imports for the United Nations, have not had to turn back any of the trucks, a U.N. official said. "The quality of the goods has been judged to be satisfactory."

"We've had good cooperation with the Iraqi authorities both at the political level and now at the technical level," the official said.

## GRRTITUDE

### The Arab Potash Company

wishes to extend its sincere thanks to everyone who expressed their grief and shared our sorrow at the tragic loss of our managing director and friend

## Suleiman Hawari

Special gratitude and thanks to all those who attended the funeral, presented their condolences, or sent messages of support.

May God rest the soul of the deceased.

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From March 25 until April 3, 1997  
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Cloths, toys, books, non-perishable foods, monetary contributions and anything that will put a smile on a child's face will be collected, or you can deposit your contribution to:-  
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Donated gifts should be send to the address below (See map)  
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Following, allocated funds will be distributed all over the kingdom between April 6 until April 15, 1997  
An account of what is contributed will appear daily in local newspapers

We hope you will join us in making this Eid one to remember for our needy children, even if it means a sacrifice.

For further information call 613081 or Fax 613083

Notes:  
- Items should be clean and in a good condition  
- When sending a parcel, kindly attach a brief description with a recommended age or size.



## World Bank sees continued strong private investment in emerging markets

WASHINGTON (R) — Private investment in emerging markets surged 33 per cent in 1996 and was expected to remain strong even if interest rates edge up in the United States, World Bank chief economist Joseph Stiglitz said Sunday.

Mr. Stiglitz, who joined the bank last month after serving as the chairman of U.S. President Bill Clinton's Council of Economic Advisers, said he expected rates to go up but not to levels that would significantly divert investment from developing countries.

The World Bank, in its annual report on global development finance, said private investment in 1996 surged for the sixth consecutive year, jumping \$60 billion to a record \$244 billion.

In the past, investment in emerging markets had leveled off when interest rates in less risky, wealthy industrial countries have become more attractive.

"They'll (the rates) go up but they'll not go up much," he said in a briefing for reporters. "The United States is not in the midst of an overheated economy."

Many analysts expect the Federal Reserve, the United States central bank, to raise rates when policymakers meet Tuesday to help keep inflation from stirring as U.S. economic expansion enters its seventh year.

"The growth of private capital flows in the 1990s should continue as more developing countries improve macroeconomic management and open their markets to competition from the rest of the world," Mr. Stiglitz said.

He declined to say if the increase would match the 1996 jump but said all signs pointed to a rise for the foreseeable future.

Driving the increases, the report said, were investors eager to diversify their portfolios in search of higher profits in the markets of the emerging economies.

Developing countries had been improving their economic management, strengthening financial institutions along with legal and regulatory regimes. The door in many countries was also open to foreign investment as never before.

The report said investors had generally shaken off the shock that followed the 1994-95 Mexican peso crisis, suggesting increased sophistication and skill at picking and choosing investments.

At the same time, the bank criticized wealthy countries for continuing to turn their backs on providing long-term development aid for the poorer countries.

So-called official development finance from wealthy countries as well as the multilateral development banks fell to \$40.8 billion last year from \$53 billion in 1995.

Concessional finance to the poorest countries was also in retreat, falling by nearly \$1 billion to \$4.4

billion, as budget-strapped countries cut back on help to such agencies as the World Bank's International Development Association.

While the vast amount of private capital still finds its way into just 12 emerging economies, the percentage that these nations attract has dropped to 73 per cent in 1996 from 84 per cent in 1990 as other countries have also become attractive.

The 12 emerging countries most favoured by investors are China, Mexico, Brazil, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Argentina, India, Russia, Turkey, Chile and Hungary.

But even Africa, which is still largely shunned by investors despite a strong record of reform in some nations, has been getting capital flows that are 10 times greater than they were at the beginning of the decade, the bank said.

## Syria to unify exchange rates and shake-up banking system

DAMASCUS (AFP) — Syria is to unify its exchange rates and shake up its state-controlled banking system, Economy Minister Muhammad Al Imadi said in remarks published Monday.

"The 1998 budget will be calculated on the basis of a single exchange rate," Dr. Imadi told German economists at a conference here Sunday.

However, Dr. Imadi, quoted by the official daily Tishrin, warned that the unification would take

time to avoid a catastrophic effect on food prices.

The U.S. dollar exchanges at 43.50 Syrian pounds at the official rate here, while rates practised in neighbouring countries put the dollar at around 50 Syrian pounds.

Dr. Imadi said moves were underway to "modernise and adapt" Syrian banks even though they would remain under state control.

Syria's banking system is considered as an obstacle to foreign investment in the country.

The economy minister also said agriculture was the biggest sector of Syria's economy, providing 30 per cent of its income and employing 35 per cent of its workforce.

Syria exported 200,000 tonnes of grain in 1995 for the first time after becoming self-sufficient, and has enjoyed record harvests of cotton and olives in the past several years.

## Food prices fall sharply in Baghdad

BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP) — Prices of basic foodstuffs fell sharply and the exchange rate of Iraq's dinar improved Monday as more trucks carrying commodities arrived from neighbouring Turkey and others were reported on the way from Jordan. The shipments are the first benefits of the U.N. oil-for-food deal signed in December in a limited easing of international sanctions. The food is not expected to be distributed for weeks under the U.N. programme, but traders in the main Baghdad markets said the arrival of the first shipments, mainly lentils and cooking oil, already was affecting prices.

Meat was sold Monday for 1,500 dinars per kilogramme, down from 2,250 dinars the day before. Some other commodities fell to half their price a week ago, traders in the main Shuja market said. The Iraqi dinar, meanwhile, went to 1,000 to the U.S. dollar Monday, the best rate for eight months following the first deliveries. The dinar traded for as much as 1,500 early this month before the food arrival.

## Arab Gulf countries seen weathering oil price fall

ABU DHABI (AFP) — A recent slide in oil prices is not expected to have a major impact on the budgets of Arab Gulf states as it is a temporary decline and they are still well above projections, experts have said.

Oil prices have slipped by more than \$2 to below \$20 over the past two weeks after coming under pressure of increased world output and slackening seasonal demand that could weaken further in the next months.

"A \$2 decline costs the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) more than \$23 billion per day," an Abu Dhabi-based oil executive said.

"But I don't think they are worried about this as they expect crude oil prices to weaken during this period. The expectations are that prices will not lose much in 1997 and this will still be good to their budgets as in 1996," he added.

The price of North Sea benchmark Brent is fluctuating around \$19.9, more than

\$2 lower than in January and February.

But that was far above the level projected by Saudi Arabia and its partners in the 16-year-old defence, political and economic alliance.

While the kingdom forecast a price of \$16.5 for 1997, Kuwait usually projects a minimum \$13 while the outlook in Oman and the UAE is around \$14.

GCC states, which also include Qatar and Bahrain, assume low oil prices in calculating their budget revenues to guard against a sudden price fluctuation given the strong impact of this on their economies.

Experts said oil prices could continue their downward trend in the second and third quarters before they start recovering in the last quarter.

But they ruled out a sharp decline due to expected high growth in demand in 1997 and compliance by most Gulf oil heavyweights with output quotas assigned by

the 11-nation Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).

"Oil prices are under pressure of increased world production and the resumption of Iraqi crude exports," a Saudi-based banker said.

"Our expectations are that prices will be slightly lower in 1997 than in 1996 as strong demand will offset the increase in output," he added.

According to the International Energy Agency, global oil supplies surged by nearly 2.28 million barrels per day (bpd) in the four months until February to reach 74.79 million bpd. OPEC's production in February remained steady at around 26.9 million bpd as most of the rise in world output came from other producers. Firm demand and the absence of embargo-hit Iraq from the market in most of 1996 boosted oil prices to a 13-year high of nearly \$20. The increase fetched the GCC more than \$12 billion in extra income.

A recent estimate by Henry Azzam, chief economist at the Saudi National Commercial Bank, showed prices will average around \$19.5 in 1997.

### REUTERS

### REUTERS

#### The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	SLG	FRF
US Dollar	1.0000	1.8821	0.7188	1.4955	122.83	1.3774	1600.50	1.8975	5.6835
DE Mark	0.5296	1.0000	0.4366	0.9840	79.36	0.8956	1036.24	1.3363	4.9361
GB Sterling	1.4180	2.7283	1.0000	2.3837	166.69	2.2259	2731.85	3.0664	9.2007
CHF Franc	0.6852	1.3125	0.2642	1.0000	84.70	0.8495	1147.38	1.3305	3.9966
JP Yen	0.0081	1.3735	0.5033	1.1877	1.0000	1.1209	13.74	154.41	4.6330
CAD Dollar	0.7280	1.4020	0.4872	1.0988	0.885	1.0000	1200.00	1.5556	4.5357
IT Lira	0.0006	0.9580	0.3659	0.8864	1376.65	0.8150	1.0000	11.23	3.3688
SLG Gulder	0.5270	0.9834	0.3255	0.7851	64.69	0.7756	896.17	1.0000	2.9585
FR Franc	0.1756	0.2964	0.1086	0.2522	21.65	0.2416	33.31	33.3100	1.0000

Energy		
Oil	Unit	Price
Brent	19.10	19.30
WTI	21.30	21.50
Bony	19.10	19.30
Dubai	18.45	18.70
UL Gas	207.00	202.00

Mid-East Currencies				
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF
SA Riyal	0.2667	0.4803	0.16506	0.38957
AE Dirham	0.2726	0.4902	0.16881	0.39794
KW Dinar	3.2014	5.67414	2.0429	4.6218
YD Dinar	0.2770	0.4928	0.16917	0.39794
CY Pound	1.9755	3.5355	1.222	2.8838

Metal Prices		
Metal	Bid	Offer
Gold (oz)	350.15	350.65
Silver (oz)	16.15	16.25
Platinum (oz)	375.5	376.5
Al (3 Months)	1620	1630
CD (3 Months)	2360	2370
Lead (3 Months)	678	680
NE (3 Months)	7700	7700

Currency Deposit Rates (Bid)				
Period	1 -	3 -	6 -	12 -
C'y	Month	Months	Months	Year
USD	5.49	5.62	6.03	6.31
DEM	4.12	4.33	4.56	4.83
JPY	0.71	0.47	0.52	0.51
CHF	3.21	3.27	3.35	3.49
FRF	2.86	2.95	3.06	3.18
ITL	7.30	7.36	7.33	7.30

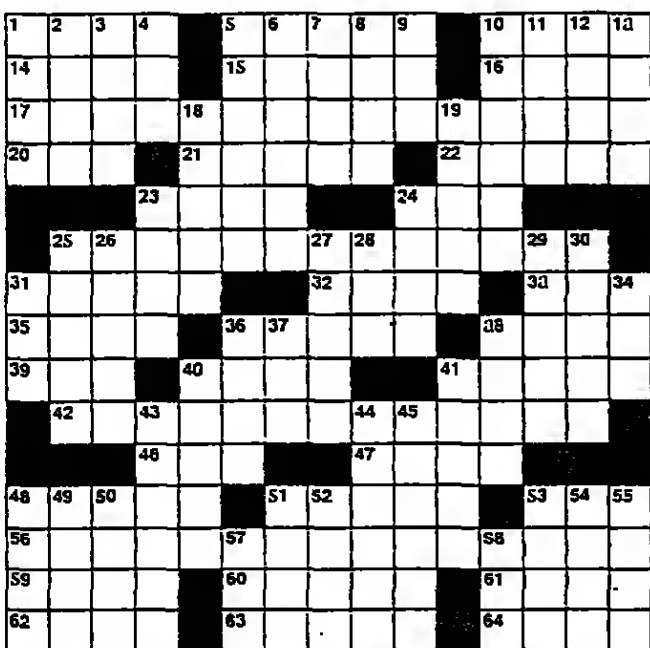
Main Equity Indices						
Bourse	Index	Value	Chng	% Chng	High	Low
New York	DOW JONES	8811.97	7.13	0.11	8837.27	8783.84
Nasdaq	FTSE 100	4214.8	40	-0.94	4265.6	4214.3
London	Nikkei 225	15834.3	310	1.98	15900.0	15733.3
Tokyo	CAC 40	2579.28	-7.85	-0.3	2609.12	2572.31
Paris	DAX	3321.94	23.8	0.72	3329.49	3313.48
Frankfurt						

Energy		
Commodity	Last	Deliver
Coffee (c/lb)	175.25	Spot
Cocoa (5/ton)	1482	Spot
Sugar (5/ton)	309	Spot
Wheat (5/ton)	111	Spot
Soy (5/ton)	23.15	Spot
Tea (5/ton)	135	Spot
Barley (5/ton)	0	Spot
Rice (5/ton)	800	Spot

JOD Cross Rates			
Currency	Buy	Sell	
US Dollar	0.708	0.710	
DE Mark	0.4187	0.4208	
FR Franc	0.1242	0.1248	
UK Yen	0.0756	0.0765	
NL Gulder	0.3722	0.3741	
IT Lira	0.0157	0.0158	

### THE Daily Crossword

- ACROSS**
- Agreement
  - Forward area
  - NV town
  - Bread spread
  - Dud
  - Butcher's offering
  - Some trees
  - Devour
  - Once more
  - Uncorks
  - Thanks — !
  - Solution: abbr.
  - More trees
  - Eyes
  - coquettishly
  - Unctuous
  - Rule of conduct
  - Sauce thickener
  - Establish validity
  - Unadulterated
  - Equip with firepower
  - Stadium sounds
  - Highly favored
  - Still more trees
  - Type of actor
  - Level
  - Book of maps
  - Female vampire
  - Las Vegas
  - Some other trees
  - Uncivil
  - " — we all?"
  - Not easily available
  - Mild expletive
  - Waterbirds
  - Sole



by Frank R. Jackson

GRAN	DEINT	COTITA
RA:MA	EPEE	AINWARI
AION	LIEN	STOKE
DIOU	BLECROSS	BEA
ENRIOT	RAISIA	
ANITIS	OMAR	IGOT
LEWID	THAINE	PENT
AVIS	HOIST	SERGE
SECEDE	HARE	
ELITE	ERRATA	
SLOT	PAIROFF	IVES
CLOMP	DOMIE	DASH
ALLIE	EMIR	ESTE
RAIDAR	REITS	STAIN

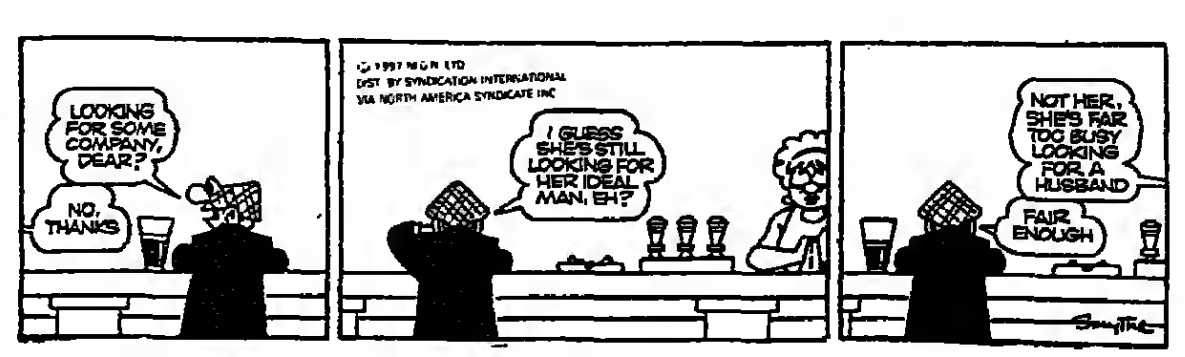
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- DOWN**
- Vatican resident
  - Inter —
  - Penny
  - Shoe part
  - Wine vessel
  - Give an account of
  - Atlanta stadium
  - Name of something
  - Big bang source
  - Slip by
  - Easy bounding gait
  - Drying oven
  - Small bills
  - Cardiff's land
  - Cash
  - Pinnacle
  - Proficient
  - Ancient Greek marketplace
  - Sink
  - Unfettered
  - 1004
  - Bits of evidence
  - Roughly unpleasant
  - A feast —
  - famine
  - Soaked
  - Short production
  - Legendary bird
  - Scheme of action
  - Violent detonation
  - Shatter
  - out (brought to an end)
  - Evil spirits
  - Operate a plane
  - Farm plot
  - Mother of Castor and Pollux
  - Bait
  - Fits to —
  - Lima or navy
  - Nobleman
  - Low card
  - Find fault continuously
  - Player for pay

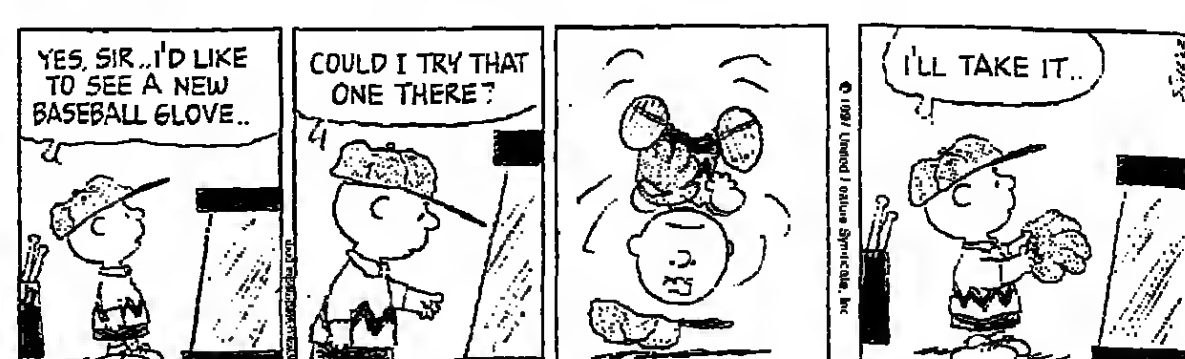
### Peanuts



### Andy Capp



### Mutt'n'Jeff



### HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR TUESDAY, MARCH 25, 1997

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll, Righer Foundation

**ARIES:** (March 21 to April 19) You can use your good ideas today to make your business dealings more profitable, so get an early start and thereby become quite successful. If you need a favour from a fellow business associate or bigwig, just ask.

**TAURUS:** (April 20 to May 20) If you state your aims clearly to a superior today, this person can assist you greatly. Don't take any risk where your reputation is concerned or those who depend upon your good name will lose face when it really counts.

**GEMINI:** (May 21 to June 21) A short trip can prove quite profitable today if you stay alert to any open opportunities. Change your attitude towards a superior today and receive many benefits in the days ahead which you were not expecting.

**MOON CHILDREN:** (June 22 to July 21) Use a more modern system today and become more efficient at your career activities. A special talent you possess can earn you more money, so pursue this opportunity with full speed ahead and you can become successful.

**LEO:** (July 22 to August 21) Take your mate along for an amusement with friends today, however, be sure you know the cost beforehand or you could be embarrassed by the situation. Later this evening will be good for speaking with knowledgeable people.

**VIRGO:** (August 22 to September 22) If you are willing to take on more duties at home today, you can avoid a disagreement with your loved ones. Entertain some influential guests later this evening and show them a good time for you could use their support.

**LIBRA:** (September 23 to October 22) You should not hesitate to contact a good friend who has fine ideas for recreational activities which are fun. Use your imagination to improve your financial status and thereby you can have extra funds for an emergency.

**SCORPIO:** (October 23 to November 21) If your loved ones are spending too lavishly today, tactfully correct them and get good results from your actions. Pay particular attention to your health tonight and in the days ahead so that you won't feel under the weather.

**SAGITTARIUS:** (November 22 to December 21) If you have had a disagreement with a good friend today, be cooperative and a reconciliation will be easy. Get involved in new activities later this evening which can present you with some business opportunities.

**CAPRICORN:** (December 22 to January 20) A superior will give you some highly valuable advice today, so be sure to listen carefully to what is said. This can be of great help to you in the days ahead for your career activities to be successful.

**AQUARIUS:** (January 21 to February 19) You will have an unusual amount of determination today where your goals are concerned, so be sure to use this extra energy profitably. Later this evening will be good for you to meet with knowledgeable people and gain their advice.

**PISCES:** (February 20 to March 20) Higher-ups are expecting a great deal from you today, so buckle down and don't disappoint them with your efforts. Handle that credit quickly later this evening and thereby you can make your financial situation better.

**Birthstone of March:** Aquamarine — Jasper



TEL: (09-07) FAX: (07-433) FAX: 804231





Swedish rally driver Kenneth Eriksson and his team mate Staffan Parmander in action in their Subaru 555 during the 3th section of the Portuguese Rally. Eriksson is leading the Portuguese Rally at the end of the third section (Reuters photo)

## McRae retakes lead after controversial opening

FIGUEIRA DA FOZ, Portugal (R) — World rally championship leader Colin McRae of Britain took the lead in the rally of Portugal after the fourth stage on Monday following a night of controversy.

The Subaru driver had led the event after the opening spectator stage on Sunday but the results were declared null and void because of damage sustained to Finn Tommi Makinen's Mitsubishi brakes during pre-event scrutineering.

The problem, most likely caused when the car was weighed, meant that Makinen was unable to put in a competitive time and was 12 seconds slower than McRae. Mitsubishi successfully appealed for the stage results to be

cancelled out.

"The stewards probably bashed the car when they were weighing it," said a team spokesman. "He was unable to go at speed and lost a lot of time."

Carlos Sainz of Spain had strongly criticised the opening day's stage, which was shortened from 3.7 kms to 1.5 because of spectator problems.

"To run a stage like this is not very clever," said the Ford driver, who was lying third at the end of the fourth stage. "There were far too many spectators."

"The rally made big improvements in crowd safety in 1995 but today there were too many people standing too close to the road."

## Arab Clubs Basketball Championship Jazireh next play Libya, Tunisia

By a Jordan Times  
Staff Reporter

JORDAN'S Al Jazireh will play Libya's Nasr in the second match of the round deciding 9-16th places at the 11th Arab Clubs Basketball Championship in Nabeul, Tunisia Friday.

Al Jazireh lost to Libya's Murouj 75-63 Sunday evening and will also meet Tunisia's Irtihad in their last match of the competition Wednesday.

Al Jazireh had led Al Murouj 12-4 early in the first half which ended 29-29.

Al Jazireh lost ground when two key players — Yousef Abu Bakr and Ma'an Odeh — could not continue the match due to injuries they sustained in earlier matches.

Both teams drew 50-50 before the Libyan team took the lead and sealed the match with a win.

Hussam Lutfi again carried the burden of scoring for his team but was limited by 231 centimetre-tall Libyan giant. Jazireh's Lutfi was top scorer in the first round with 97 points. Tunisian television also interviewed teammate Mu'tasem Salameh as he is the youngest and shortest players in the tournament.

Al Jazireh could not qualify for the quarterfinals after losing 67-65 (31-27) to Lebanon's Al Hikmah.

Their first round matches included an opening 79-71 loss to Algeria's Bofariq and 92-60 to Tunisian champions Al Zahra.

Despite their losing streak so far, Arab Basketball Federation officials lauded Al Jazireh's participation and results as the team mainly includes under-22 players making their inaugural Arab Clubs Championship against teams with professional lineups.

Playing for 9-16th places are Kuwait's Al Jahra', Algeria's Bina', and Lebanon's Al Hikmah.

Nine Arab countries are taking part in the event hosted by Al Mal'ab Al Nabli.

The participating 16 men's teams had been divided into

four groups with the two in each group moving to the quarterfinals to play for 1-8th places.

Teams include Al Mal'ab (Tunisia), Al Riyadi (Lebanon), Al Zahra' (Tunisia), Bofariq (Algeria), Zamalek (Egypt), Al Irtihad (Saudi Arabia), Al Wadi (Tunisia), Al Irtihad (Egypt), Ohud (Saudi Arabia).

Only six teams are taking part in the 7th Women's Championship. They include hosts Al Hilal, Al Safa' and Al Mal'ab of Tunisia, Egypt's Al Ahli, Hussein Dai of Algeria, and Lebanon's Homenetmen.

The championship organisers have allocated prizes for top scorer, best player, ideal team in addition to best three-point scorer.

In previous Arab championships, Jordan's former First Division champions Al Ahli and reigning champs Al Orthodoxi represented Jordan but declined to participate this year citing preparations for the country's First Division Championship.

Titleholders Al Orthodoxi, the country's undisputed basketball powerhouse from 1976-1989, have now won back the title in the past two seasons and repeating that is a top priority.

They started the season by winning the Under-22 championship title last month.

On the other hand, Al Ahli are hoping to regain their title which they won in 90, 92, 93 and 94 and have recruited new Armenian coach Raffi Cholukyan, who was in charge of the Russian team at the 1992 Barcelona Olympics.

Third-ranked Al Jazireh hope that the Arab championship will provide the team with a chance to test their readiness for the First Division Championship which they will try to win for the first time in their history.

They have become serious contenders for the Kingdom's First Division Championship during the past two years thanks to their unyielding, competitive spirit.

Last season, they beat Al Ahli and had a sure shot at second if not first place but later faltered in the final round.

## English soccer crowds continue to rise

LONDON (AFP) — Crowd figures at non-Premiership League matches are set to reach new heights of around 11.5 million for the season, the football league announced Monday.

The latest figures show the continuing upward trend in attendance that began with the launch of end-of-season play-offs in the 1986-87 season.

The play-off system was introduced in the season after attendance hit an all-time low of 16.5 million across the

then four divisions of the football league.

And despite the attractions of the Premiership in which interest has boomed since it was introduced five years ago, attendance in the three lower divisions have continued to rise.

This year's projected figure of 11.4 million means 100,000 more fans passed through the turnstiles this year than in the 1995/96 season, and 800,000 more than in 1994/95. Last

year 10.5 million fans attended Premiership matches.

With this weekend's Premiership programme cancelled because of international football league chiefs are expecting an attendance boost of more than 500,000 fans over the Easter weekend.

Football league spokesman Chris Hull said: "We're hoping the numbers will be swelled further by fans of Premiership clubs."

## Juventus, Real Madrid and Monaco move closer to titles

PARIS (AFP) — Juventus, Real Madrid and Monaco kept their minds on job in hand and moved closer to their respective league titles this weekend.

European champions Juventus, who on Wednesday booked their passage to the European cup semi-finals by beating Rosenborg of Norway, were made to work hard for a goalless draw at Napoli but went six points clear of Parma who crashed 1-0 at Fiorentina.

Two goals from Fernando Hierro earned Real Madrid a 2-0 win over Real Zaragoza — a victory which kept them nine points clear of rivals Barcelona who hammered Sevilla 4-0.

French pacesetters as Monaco, fresh from their UEFA Cup triumph over Newcastle in midweek, showed their class with a 3-1 win over Bastia to stay seven points clear of Paris Saint Germain who continued their recent revival with a 2-0 win over Metz at the Parc des Princes.

With Croatian forward Alen Boksic and fellow-striker Vladimir Jugovic suspended and with Alessandro Del Piero and Moreno Torricelli out with injury, Juventus knew they were in for a tough clash against the Italian Cup finalists who have been beaten only once at home all season.

But Juventus came to defend and coach Marcello Lippi revamped

the line-up by leaving out striker Nicola Amoroso for another defender in Gianluca Pessotto.

Although the league leaders had Uruguayan defender Paolo Montero sent off for a professional foul after 37 minutes, goalkeeper Angelo Peruzzi kept Napoli at bay with a string of top class saves.

Parma, on a high after their win over Inter Milan the previous week, went down to a Lilian Thuram own-goal away to the Cup Winners' Cup semi-finalists Fiorentina. And the final score could have been greater with the home side going close several times.

Roy Hodgson's UEFA Cup semi-finalists Inter Milan leapfrogged Sampdoria to go into third place by beating Verona 2-1 at the San Siro. Their goals came from Maurizio Ganz and Marco Branca.

Sandwiched in between was a consolation from Filippo Maniero for the visitors.

Sampdoria themselves slipped back as they could only manage a 2-2 draw at struggling Piacenza but reigning champions AC Milan recovered some lost pride in moving back into the top-half of the table by winning 2-0 at Atalanta — their goals coming from George Weah and Stefano Eranio.

Lazio kept up their hopes of a UEFA Cup place with a 2-0 victory away to Vicenza with Pavel Nedved and Diego

Fuser both finding the net.

For Real Madrid, Hierro scored his goals in the 35th and 43rd minutes. While Barcelona's scorers were Oscar, Brazilian Ronaldo, Juan Antonio Pizzi and Luis Enrique.

Despite the victory Barcelona's English manager Bobby Robson was jeered for the last quarter-of-an-hour when he failed to replace Josep Guardiola by Romania's Gheorghe Popescu.

Barcelona are level on points with Betis who won 4-0 at Real Oviedo.

Elsewhere fourth-placed Deportivo La Coruna, three points behind Barcelona, beat Racing Santander 2-1 for their sixth consecutive victory.

Brazil's Ronaldo was prominent in the match and even scored the second Deportivo goal after France's Corentin Martins hit the opener.

Seventh-placed Athletic Bilbao could only draw 2-2 at home to Compostela with Julien Guerrero hitting both goals for the Basque side, and Atletico Madrid won 2-1 at Rayo Vallecano.

In France, where as Monaco closed on their sixth league title — Scottish international John Collins gave the principality side the best possible start against Bastia by scoring after just 13 minutes.

And although Scierzewski crashed in a stunning equaliser before



FC Barcelona's Brazilian star Ronaldo kicks the ball to score a goal during the Spanish first division soccer match against Real Madrid in Barcelona's Nou Camp Stadium. Barcelona won 4-0 (Reuters photo)

the break. Brazilian twice in the second period.

With eight games remaining Monaco now

have 62 points from 30 matches while nearest challengers Paris St Germain have 55.

Patrice Loko, who scored a hat-trick in the French side's win over AEK Athens in Europe in midweek, also scored both goals in Sunday's league match.

Meanwhile Nantes, who began the season disastrously, meanwhile moved into third place by stretching their unbeaten run to 23 matches after defeating Lille 1-0.

Strasbourg slid below Nantes when they surprisingly succumbed 2-1 at Guingamp, and Bordeaux managed only a 1-1 draw at struggling Nancy.

Champions Auxerre suffered an adverse reaction from their European Cup exit at the hands of Dortmund when they went down 2-1 at Lens.

In Germany, Bayern Munich stayed top after scoring a gritty 2-0 victory over Karlsruhe. It was a badly needed win and will go some way to quieting the behind the scenes turmoil at the club which have dominated football headlines in Germany.

Bayern now have a two-point advantage over Stuttgart and Bayer Leverkusen, with Borussia Dortmund fourth, three points behind the leaders.

Martin Dahlin hit one of the season's fastest goals Saturday as Borussia Moenchengladbach scored a 3-1 victory over champions Dortmund.

Dahlin headed home after only 15 seconds, catching Dortmund's napping defence off guard, and Polish striker Andrzej Juskowiak and Joergen Pettersen hit the others.

Dortmund's bitter defeat opened the gate for Stuttgart, who cantered to a 4-0 victory over Fortuna Dueseldorf Friday evening, and Bayer Leverkusen, who fought back from a goal down in Freiburg to win 2-1.

But Alexander Zickler was Bayern's hero as he scored both in the 30th and 90th minutes.

The home side badly missed the services of Thomas Haessler in their midfield while Sean Dundee showed the effects of having been a month away with a calf injury.

In the Netherlands PSV Eindhoven suffered their first home defeat of the season when they went down 1-0 against Heerenveen. But they remained top of the Dutch league on goal difference over Feyenoord.

However hooliganism reared its ugly head on Sunday and one person was killed and several others seriously injured in violent clashes between Ajax and Feyenoord fans.

TODAY AT

CINEMA TEL:634144

PHILADELPHIA "1"

Kevin Bacon, Robert Deniro,  
Dustin Hoffman, Jason Patrick  
& Brad Pitt... in

SLEEPERS

Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

CINEMA TEL:634144

PHILADELPHIA "2"

Ethan Hawke  
& Julie Delpy.... in

BEFORE SUNRISE

Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

CINEMA TEL:699238

PLAZA

Adel Imam, Shireen  
& Saeed Saleh  
Bakhit Wa Adilah (2)  
Al Jardal Walkankah

Shows: 12:00, 2:00, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30

CINEMA TEL:677420

CONCORD

CONCORD "1"

MADONNA &  
ANTONIO BANDERAS...IN  
EVITA

Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:00, 8:30, 10:30

Nabil & Hisham's Theatre

TEL: 625155

Aman.. Ya Ho

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Saturday & Sunday  
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## Mourning makes triumphant return to Heat lineup

MINNEAPOLIS (R) — Star centre Alonzo Mourning made a triumphant return to the Miami Heat Sunday, scoring 21 points and pulling down eight rebounds to lead the Heat to a 113-108 victory over the Minnesota Timberwolves.

Miami's sixth consecutive win, combined with a loss by the Knicks, pushed the Heat to 2 1/2 games ahead of New York in the Atlantic Division.

Tim Hardaway had 22 points and eight assists and Voshon Lenard added 22 and seven rebounds for Miami, which went 9-4 with Mourning sidelined by a torn tendon in his right foot.

"It was a good day to bring Mourning back," Miami coach Pat Riley said. "We needed him."

Riley was not thrilled with his team's performance but said: "We stayed close enough to make the plays needed to win the game."

Stephen Marbury had 27 points and nine assists and Tom Gugliotta added 25 and 14 rebounds for Minnesota.

The Timberwolves tied the game at 97-97, but Jamal Mashburn and Hardaway responded with consecutive three-pointers to help the Heat pull away down the stretch.

In New York, Kenny Anderson had 13 of his 24 points in the fourth quarter and Isaiah Rider keyed a pivotal second-half run as the Portland Trail Blazers beat the Knicks 94-88 for their 12th win in 13 games.

Rider scored 12 of his 23 during a 16-5 run that bridged the third and fourth quarters and put Portland in front.

Patrick Ewing, as usual, led New York with 35 points.

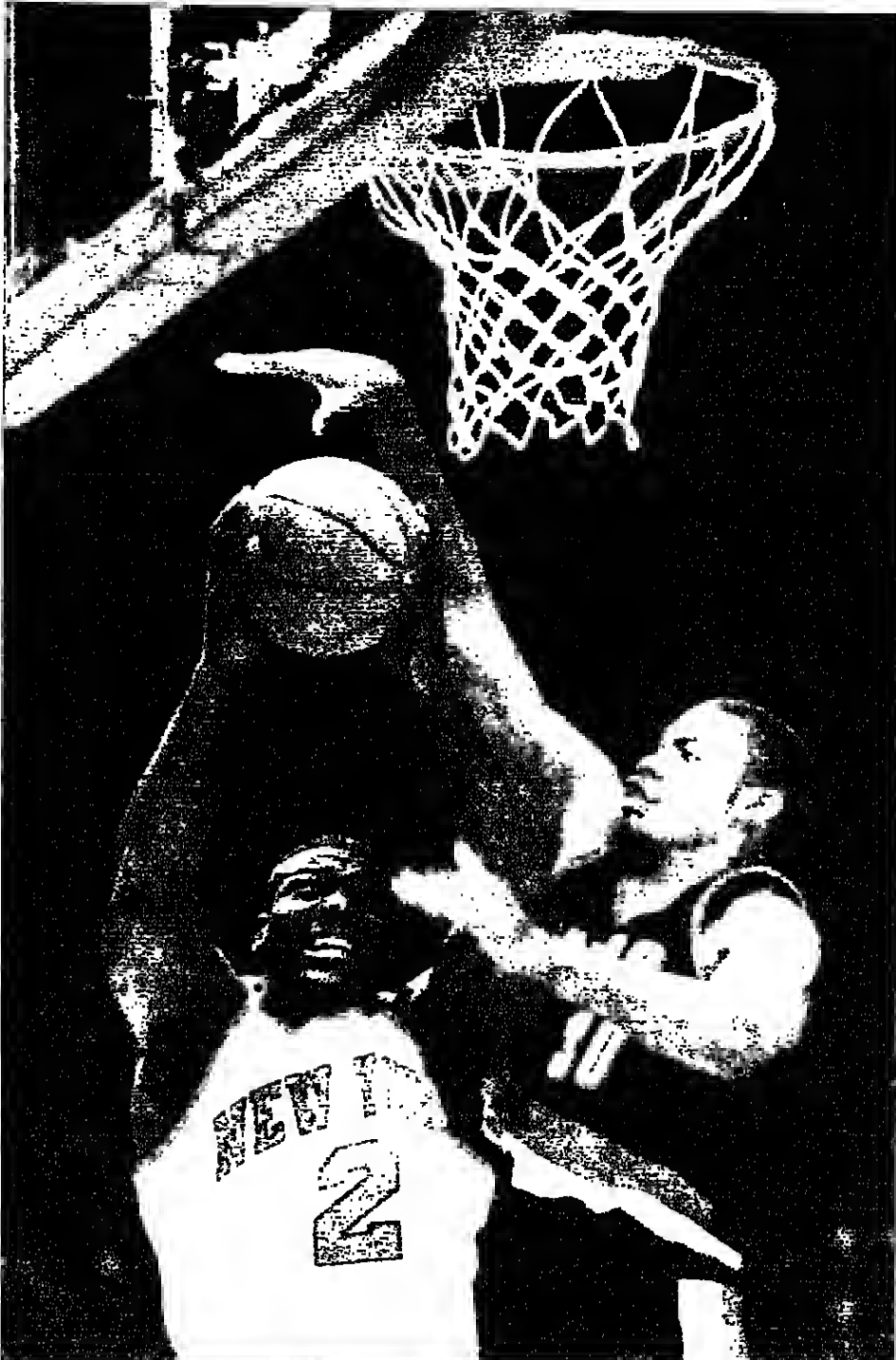
Portland needs one more win to clinch its 15th consecutive NBA playoff berth.

In Orlando, Nick Anderson scored 13 of his 21 points in the first half and Horace Grant had 16 points and 16 rebounds as the Magic dominated the first half and coasted to a 110-84 victory over the Los Angeles Lakers.

The Magic built a 31-14 lead after one quarter and a commanding 66-38 advantage by halftime.

Penny Hardaway added 21 points, five rebounds and five assists for the Magic, who received tremendous support from the crowd for the game against the team that stole Shaquille O'Neal from Orlando. O'Neal, who is injured did not play.

"The emotion level was at an all-time high," Orlando's



Portland Trail Blazers forward Rasheed Wallace (30) leaps to block a shot by New York Knicks forward Larry Johnson in the first period of their NBA game at New York's Madison Square Garden. Despite Johnson's protests the only foul that was called was on Johnson — a technical foul for arguing there should have been a foul called (Reuters photo)

Rony Seikaly said. "At one point, it got so loud that I couldn't hear my teammates ... standing two feet from me."

In Denver, Karl Malone scored 35 points and John Stockton added 22 points and dished out 15 assists as the red-hot Utah Jazz breezed to a 120-103 rout of the Nuggets.

Jeff Hornacek added 14 points for the Jazz, who posted their seventh straight victory.

Antonio McDyess scored 24 points and Laphonso Ellis added 22 for the Nuggets, losers of four in a row.

Malone, who has at least 30 points in five of Utah's last six games, scored 17 in the third quarter as Utah took a 90-75 lead into the fourth.

In Vancouver, Gary Payton and Shawn Kemp combined for 22 of Seattle's 34 first-quarter points as the SuperSonics raced to a 15-point lead and never looked back in a 106-92 victory over the Grizzlies.

Payton finished with 31 points, six rebounds and 11 assists, while Kemp had 18 and six rebounds for the Sonics, who shot 52 per cent (38-of-73) from the field and forced 19 Vancouver turnovers, leading to 29 Seattle points.

Shareef Abdur-Rahim scored 25 points and Bryant Reeves added 21 for

Vancouver.

In Toronto, Mookie Blaylock scored 14 of his 18 points in the first half as the Atlanta Hawks clinched a playoff berth with a 90-79 victory over the Raptors.

Steve Smith added 17 points and Christian Laettner had 15 points and 12 rebounds for Atlanta, which notched its fourth straight win to close within 1 1/2 games of Detroit for the fourth playoff spot in the east.

In Boston, Sam Cassell scored six of his 30 points in a 10-0 burst that opened the fourth quarter as the New Jersey Nets recorded a 100-91 victory over the woeful Celtics.

Kerry Kittles scored 18 points and Jimmy Jackson

added 15 for the Nets.

Eric Williams scored 29 points and Antoine Walker added 22 for the Celtics (13-57), who have established a club record for losses in a season and fell to 0-19 against Atlantic Division foes.

In Los Angeles, Malik Sealy scored 30 points and Rodney Rogers added 15 to lead the Clippers to a 106-91 victory over the injury-plagued San Antonio Spurs.

Loy Vaught added 15 for the Clippers, who moved 1 1/2 games ahead of Phoenix in the race for the seventh playoff spot in the west.

Monty Williams and Vinny Del Negro had 17 points apiece to lead San Antonio.

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Mr. Rami Abu Shakra concluded by saying: And now the heart of a great new fragrance from Elizabeth Arden. 5th Avenue is available at all Abu Shakra's showrooms and some refined perfumeries.

## Chang upset, Hingis marches on at Lipton Championships

KEY BISCAYNE, Florida (R) — Third seed Michael Chang saw his hot streak halted by Sergi Bruguera in the third round of the Lipton Championships Sunday, but women's top seed Martina Hingis showed no sign that her own winning streak would end any time soon.

A sluggish looking Chang fell 6-4 6-3 to the 35th-ranked Spaniard in a clash of former French Open champions, ending the American's string of 11 consecutive match wins.

Chang, who won Lipton in 1992, had claimed titles in his previous two tour events at Memphis and Indian Wells.

"It's been a good run for me," said Chang, who complained of cramping despite the relatively short 94-minute match.

Hingis, meanwhile, stretch her unblemished 1997 match record to 22-0 by taking out a player who has been projected as one of the Swiss teen's likely future challengers.

In a third-round matchup of 16-year-olds, soon-to-be World No. 1 Hingis picked off American Venus Williams 6-4, 6-2 after spotting Williams the first three games.

"You never want to lose to someone the same age as you are," said Hingis, who takes over the top ranking from Steffi Graf March 31 regardless of what happens here.

The youth brigade produced another third-round winner when promising 15-year-old Russian Anna Kournikova recovered from a first-set drubbing to oust 34th-ranked Katarina Stutenikova of Slovakia 1-6 4-6 6-0.

Second seed Arantxa Sanchez Vicario, third seed Jana Novotna and fourth seed Monica Seles, playing her first tournament of the year, also advanced.

In men's play, swift-serving Australian Mark Philippoussis dominated ninth-seed Wayne Ferreira of South Africa 6-3 6-3 in another third round match, while Andrei Medvedev of Ukraine bounced 11th seed Alberto Costa of Spain 6-3 3-6 7-6.

The 28th-ranked Philippoussis came extremely close to matching his ATP Tour record 142 mile per hour (228 kph) serve during the 61-minute



Martina Hingis of Switzerland backhands a second set serve from Venus Williams of the United States during the third round at the Lipton Championships. Hingis defeated the unseeded Williams 6-4, 6-2 (Reuters photo)

match.

At 30-0 in the second game of the second set, Philippoussis belted a serve that was clocked at 141 mph (227 kph). The 10th-ranked Ferreira was able to get his racket on the ball, but just barely.

For Bruguera, who has slipped in the rankings since being third in 1994, this marked his first victory over a top-five player since he beat Goran Ivanisevic at Rome in 1995.

Bruguera did offer Chang eight opportunities to break his serve. But the third seed managed to convert just one — in the second game of the second set.

Fourth seed Goran Ivanisevic of Croatia narrowly avoided upset at the Lipton Championships Sunday night, but eked out a win over local favorite Vince Spadea in an ill-tempered third round match.

The unpredictable

Croatian fought off Spadea record a 3-6, 7-6, 6-4 victory and a hostile crowd to win.

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## OIC summit supports Palestinians, Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (Agencies) - Muslim leaders began leaving Islamabad Monday after a special Islamic summit which gave strong support to Palestinian claims on Jerusalem and backed Pakistan in its dispute with India over Kashmir.

The extraordinary summit of the 54-member Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) held here Sunday to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Pakistan's independence was dominated by a new crisis in the Middle East over Israel's settlement policy in Jerusalem.

After an impassioned plea from Palestinian President Yasser Arafat, the OIC called on the United Nations "to compel Israel to immediately halt its confiscation of Palestinian territory and the construction of new settlements," including a New Jewish settlement in the Arab East Jerusalem.

Israel's plans to build this settlement last week sparked the latest crisis in peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians, and prompted Mr. Arafat to start a tour of Arab and Islamic countries to win renewed support for his cause.

He called on fellow Muslims at the summit to "save Jerusalem" from an Israeli policy to Judaize the city, but he also said the Palestinians were trying to "save the peace process."

Mr. Arafat succeeded in his efforts to have the OIC issue a separate declaration on Jerusalem, while draft paragraphs calling for support for the Arab stance in the peace process were expanded in the final general declaration.

Mr. Arafat is due to attend the meeting of the OIC's Al Quds committee on March 27 and 28, and is then expected to travel to Cairo for further talks.

Other Arab leaders, including Syrian Vice President Abdul Halim Khaddam and Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri, used the conference as an opportunity to lash out at Israel and criticise the U.S. for vetoing United Nations resolutions against the Israeli plans in Jerusalem.

But Iranian President Ali Akbar Rafsanjani, who hosts the next regular OIC summit, on Monday said "there has not been an appropriate reaction" in Islamabad to the current policies of Israel and the United States in the peace process.

Mr. Rafsanjani said the OIC gathering was, however, a good opportunity for meetings on the sidelines, and said he had made progress on several issues during a meeting with Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Abdullah.

He did not specify what those issues were, but Tehran regularly criticises the continued presence of U.S. troops in Gulf Arab states like Saudi Arabia and regularly calls for anti-Israel and anti-U.S. demonstrations banned by Riyadh during the annual pilgrimage to Mecca.

Despite the dominance of the Jerusalem issue at the summit, Pakistan's new government scored a success with a declaration from Muslim leaders supporting Pakistan in its dispute with India over Kashmir.

The OIC stated the summit leaders "commitment to promote a just and peaceful solution to the Jammu and Kashmir dispute in accordance with the United Nations resolutions."

Pakistan, which administers the northern third of the Himalayan region, wants the implementation of a U.N. resolution calling for a U.N.-sponsored referendum to decide on the region's future while India opposes the plans.

Pakistan and India have fought two wars since 1947 over the Himalayan region.

The summit's final statement called on the international community to "compel" Israel to give up plans to build the settlements and to return Arab East Jerusalem to the Palestinians.

Iran objected to the resolution saying it gave tacit recognition to the state of Israel. Sunday's meeting was intended to target problems facing Muslims as they move into the 21st century.

The leaders agreed with the need for unity among the world's Islamic leaders.

Pakistani President Farooq Leghari proposed the OIC establish a permanent council for mediating disputes among member states.

Mr. Rafsanjani agreed calling for a "pragmatic mechanism" for crisis management among Islamic states.

Turkish President Suleyman Demirel advocated a united Islamic bloc that would promote trade and understanding.

The combined Islamic bloc represents one-fifth of the world's population, possesses half the world's oil resources and exports 40 per cent of its raw material, but combined its income is less than five per cent of global output, said Mr. Leghari.

"We must stand united to seek common solution to our common problems... Solidarity among member states is the key to leading the Islamic World to greater prosperity in the 21st century," said Mr. Demirel.

Delegates expressed concern that Islam was badly portrayed in the Western media and urged Muslim states to present a more tolerant face of Islam.

Several delegates made veiled attacks against Afghanistan's rigid Taliban leadership, which attended the summit as observers.

The Taliban's version of strict Islamic rule bans women from the work force, girls from schools, forces men to wear beards, outlaws the playing of music, photography and most games.

In his opening speech, Mr. Leghari said Muslim countries must remember Islam's history as a faith of academics, and stressed education as a way to hasten advancement in developing countries.

Harris Silajdzic, Bosnia's delegate to the summit said only a "pervasive" interpretation of Islam would prohibit girls from receiving an education.

Delegates expressed concerns about drug production in Afghanistan, sectarian violence and the misunderstanding of Islam by the Western world.



A Palestinian boy aims a slingshot at Israeli soldiers during clashes in the Israeli controlled area of Rachel's Tomb in Bethlehem on Monday (AFP photo)

## EU is cool to Russian desire for membership

BRUSSELS (R) - The European Union (EU), eager not to offend Russia but with no intention of building hopes for eventual EU membership, struck a non-committal stance on Monday to comments from President Boris Yeltsin about joining the bloc.

"We already have a long list of countries ready to join," British Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind said on the margins of an EU foreign ministers meeting. "Maybe that list will grow. Who knows?"

Mr. Yeltsin said on Saturday following a summit with U.S. President Bill Clinton that Russia was interested in cementing its role as a European country, including membership of the main economic body.

"Russia is also aiming to be recognised finally as a full European state and we are also prepared to join the European Union," he told reporters in Helsinki.

Publicly, EU officials have sought not to snub Mr. Yeltsin, emphasising the need to establish good links and turning attention instead to the unfinished business between the two sides.

"It is not exactly the time now to be speaking about membership," EU External Affairs Commissioner Hans van den Broek told Reuters, adding, however, that he was always reluctant to close the door on countries.

He noted that an EU-Russia partnership and cooperation agreement, signed in 1994, still awaited ratification in both Moscow and certain EU capitals.

The agreement calls for future negotia-

tions on trade links, including the long-term prospect of a free trade agreement.

"We have for the years to come set the course...with this important partner," Mr. Van den Broek said.

Failure to ratify the agreement has meant relations are now governed by an interim accord.

German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel said on Sunday that completion of the main agreement had to come before any talk of further links.

Privately, EU officials rule out any idea of Russia as an EU member anytime in the near future, citing a geography that stretches far into Asia, an economy decades away from EU standards and concerns about the mere concept of letting in a country of Russia's size.

"How European is it?" asked one EU diplomat.

He noted that Russia was struggling to become eligible for membership of organisations such as the World Trade Organisation that were far easier to join than the EU.

The EU is already committed to bringing 10 former communist countries into the fold, probably starting with Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic.

The high cost of bringing those countries into the EU - many of which are far more developed economically - would be dwarfed by the price of getting Russia ready, the diplomat said.

## Al Amal Cancer Centre honours Majali, others

AMMAN (Petra) - Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali on Monday attended a ceremony held to honour donors to Al Amal Cancer Centre.

Dr. Majali said the government was ready to support the centre with all its means and expressed appreciation and gratitude to those who donated to and supported the centre.

The executive president of the General Union of Voluntary Societies (GUVS), Abdullah Khatib, said the centre was now a charitable society which would hold its first meeting on Sunday to elect its first board of directors to supervise the centre.

"After thirteen years we are able to launch this very unprecedented centre in the Arab World in spite of all difficulties and hardships," said Dr. Khatib.

Dr. Khatib added the centre owes Dr. Majali a lot, noting that the idea of establishing and launching it was first proposed by Dr. Majali when he was president of the University of Jordan.

"He supported us when he granted the centre the amount which the Dutch government donated to charitable works," Dr. Khatib said. Then after forming a Royal committee for following up the procedures to launch Al Amal Centre, Dr. Majali supported the centre by providing it with advanced equipment to make it the top cancer centre in the region and to offer better services for Jordanian and Arab patients, said Dr. Khatib.

He said the Ministry of Health agreed to purchase the requirements of Al Amal Cancer Centre through government tenders.

"The centre is treated by the government as if it were one of its hospitals and the Ministry of Health should provide it with all its needs through public tenders," according to Dr. Khatib.

He added the main difficulty was to ask the government guarantee an annual financial support for the centre.

Lina Latouf, deputy director for planning and administration of the centre, briefed the gathering on the facilities offered by the centre, particularly diagnostic technology.

Ms. Latouf said the centre was now capable of dealing with different forms of cancer and was maintaining close contacts with Arab and international research centres.

She said the centre will serve Jordanians and Arabs. After the formal ceremony, Dr. Majali presented donors with token gifts in appreciation for their help to the centre. Deputy Prime Minister Abdullah Ensour attended the ceremony.



Locusts fetch high price as seasonal delicacy

RIYADH (AP) - The price of a Saudi delicacy has taken a big jump because of high demand, newspapers reported. The delicacy - locusts, eaten grilled or in a bisque-like soup. The locusts, popular because they are believed to increase sexual potency, are caught with wide nets during the season, starting in March and ending two months later. One-metre burlap bags of locusts are selling at open air markets for 1,000 riyals (\$267), or 5 riyals (\$13) apiece, the Arabic-language daily Al Jazeera reported. Those longer than 8 centimetres are even more expensive. The price is high now because supplies are still low early in the season. Last year, about a month into the season, the price had fallen to 375 riyals (\$100) for the one-meter bag. Locusts are grilled, then sprinkled with salt and eaten with onions and tomatoes, or cooked in a broth. Eating locusts is a Saudi tradition dating back to pre-oil boom days when food was scarce.

Israeli wants Chagall's home

TEL AVIV (AFP) - An Israeli businessman is negotiating with Russian authorities to dismantle the childhood home of Jewish artist Marc Chagall and rebuild it in West Jerusalem. Itamar Barkai, a gallery owner, wants to transform the simple brick and wood house in Witovsk near Saint Petersburg into an international art centre and museum after bringing it to Israel at a cost of several million dollars. Chagall, who died in 1985 aged 98, was born to an ultra-orthodox Jewish family in Witovsk near St. Petersburg. The family home was confiscated by the Soviet authorities when Chagall left Russia in 1922 after the Bolshevik Revolution. Confident of success, Barkai is seeking a plot of land in West Jerusalem for Chagall's house and told Israeli newspaper Yediot Aharanot he dreams of opening the arts centre next year.

Baker arrested after police find cocaine in bread

BOGOTA (R) - A Colombian baker was arrested for hiding cocaine in his bread rolls, police said. The baker allegedly sold cheese-flavoured rolls that contained a two-gramme packet of cocaine in Tulua, in the southern province of Valle del Cauca, police said. "We have never found anything like this before," a police spokesman said. "It looks like he hid the drugs in the bread to throw the anti-drug sniffer dogs off the scent." Police said students were regular buyers of the rolls, which were also delivered to homes.

Castro 'eternally infatuated' with women

HAVANA (R) - Cuban President Fidel Castro says he is "eternally infatuated with the feminine sex" and still falls in love easily but "in a platonic way," a Cuban newspaper reported. Castro, always extremely reticent on questions about his private life, revealed some of his views on love and women in the Juventud Rebelde paper. "One always likes it when somebody is in love with him, but I prefer to do the loving because when somebody was in love with me I felt pursued and didn't know what to do, as if they were harassing or besieging me," the 70-year-old Castro said. Asked if he still fell in love, Castro said: "I am eternally infatuated with the feminine sex... I fall in love easily but now in a more platonic way."

## Arafat offers to help mediate Sri Lankan civil war

COLOMBO (AFP) - Visiting Palestinian President Yasser Arafat called for peace in Sri Lanka and offered to mediate a settlement to the country's ethnic war that has killed more than 50,000 people.

Mr. Arafat told a meeting here shortly after talks with Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunga that he was willing to help restore peace in the island

where Tamil Tiger guerrillas are fighting for a separate state.

"I am under the disposal of the friendly people of Sri Lanka," Mr. Arafat said. "We are now facing a new order. The order of the new order is peace. I offer all my effort and support for you to reach a settlement."

Asked if he was willing to be a mediator between the Colombo government and its warring partner, the lib-

eration Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), Mr. Arafat said: "Yes, I am ready."

"I am offering it officially now," Mr. Arafat said at a Palestinian friendship meeting here. Mr. Arafat also held talks with Prime Minister Sirima Bandaranaike who had strongly supported the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).

He arrived here Monday after anending the

Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) summit in Pakistan and is due to leave for Bangladesh on Tuesday morning.

Several top Tamil guerrilla leaders in Sri Lanka are known to have been trained by the PLO despite appeals by the then leaders here to stop the facilities extended to the rebels.

However, Sri Lanka had remained a strong backer of the PLO cause and

Colombo accorded full diplomatic recognition to the PLO.

Mr. Arafat was given a 21-gun salute. Colombo recognises him as the president of the State of Palestine.

In 1994, the Sri Lankan government granted free accommodation to the PLO mission which was on the verge of closing due to economic reasons.

Media Minister

Dharmasiri Senanayake told reporters that ministers decided to provide a state bungalow to the PLO so they could continue their presence in Sri Lanka.

"They have told us they have no money to pay the rent for the present premises they occupy. So we decided to give them free accommodation because we think it is good to have them here," Mr. Senanayake said.

## U.S. issues fresh alert in S. Arabia

DUBAI (AFP) - The U.S. embassy in Saudi Arabia issued a new security alert on Monday after the latest threats and ahead of the annual Muslim pilgrimage in mid-April which draws two million Muslims from around the world.

It expressed "deep concern" over a statement from militant Saudi millionaire Osama Ben Laden in which he threatened the U.S. military and called for Americans to be expelled from the kingdom.

"The embassy continues to receive reports indicating possible surveillance or probes of U.S. military and government facilities suggesting that planning for terrorist action against U.S. interests in Saudi Arabia continues unabated," an embassy advisory said.

The embassy referred to previous threats of attack if militants were not released before the end of the fasting month of Ramadan, which was in early February.

The upcoming pilgrimage is "also a period of concern since the large inflow of pilgrims of all nationalities places a heavy

burden on the entire Saudi government, but most particularly the security forces," the advisory said.

The message renewed calls for U.S. citizens in Saudi Arabia to stay vigilant, keep a low profile, reduce travel within the country, vary their travel routes and timing of movements, and report any suspicious activity.

Mr. Ben Laden said Saturday that he has secured the support of thousands of Palestinians for his holy war against U.S. troops in the Middle East.

"Now the Muslim nation understands the truth and Palestinians have allied themselves to us to expel the Americans; Pakistani religious leaders are issuing fatwa against them," he told the British daily, The Independent.

Mr. Ben Laden, who was speaking from his hideout in Afghanistan, has been stripped of his Saudi nationality and is considered as a key financial backer of militants.

The U.S. embassy in Riyadh already issued a security update last month to warn American residents against attacks.

## New row brews in Turkey

ANKARA (AFP) - Turkish Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan is heading for a new confrontation with the army by refusing to implement part of an agreed plan aimed at curbing fundamentalism, the press said Monday.

Mr. Erbakan, head of the Islamist Welfare Party (Refah), will oppose a plan to increase the length of compulsory education from five to eight years at a meeting of the national security council (MGK) next Monday, the papers said.

The reform would result in the dissolution of the secondary sections of special religious schools that train imams.

The reform was part of an 18-point army-backed programme to curb creeping Islamisation which Mr. Erbakan, under intense pressure from the fiercely secular army, pledged to endorse.

## Iraq ruled by a 'cruel dictatorship,' U.N. investigator says in his report

GENEVA (Agencies) - Power in Iraq lies in the hands of a "cruel dictatorship," no opposition is tolerated and human rights are consistently violated, a U.N. official said on Monday.

In a report to the U.N. Human Rights Commission, special rapporteur Max van der Stoep also expressed concern over delays in distribution of urgently needed food and medicine to Iraqis under the U.N. oil-for-food deal.

Accusing both the U.N. and Baghdad of footdragging, he called on both sides to quickly fulfill their obligations under the arrangement, which took effect in December.

U.N. Security Council Resolution 986 allows Iraq to export \$2 billion worth of oil in six months, earmarking roughly two-thirds of revenues from the sale to meet the humanitarian needs of its population.

The Iraqi people have suffered under an international trade embargo imposed af-

ter Iraq invaded Kuwait in August 1990, triggering the Gulf war. The first supplies under the programme arrived in Iraq just last week, more than two months after Baghdad resumed oil exports for the first time in six years.

Mr. Der Stoep said the attempted assassination of President Saddam Hussein's eldest son Uday had led to thousands of detentions followed by "many executions." Uday Hussein, 33, was wounded in the attack in a residential area of the capital last December.

Some 16,199 cases of disappeared persons have not been resolved, the report said, adding the Iraqi government had responded to the U.N. working group charged with such matters in only a few hundred cases.

Just two out of 609 separate cases concerning Kuwaitis or third country nationals taken into custody by Iraq during the invasion of Kuwait had been cleared up during the past two

years. The International Committee of the Red Cross is still barred from visiting detainees in Iraq, the rapporteur added.

The report speaks of extra-judicial executions, bombardments and "blind civilian massacres" last August in Kurdish regions in northern Iraq.

Generally, civilian and political rights continued to be "violated systematically throughout the country," the rapporteur said.

In Baghdad, an Iraqi newspaper said Monday an Iraqi group plans to publicise the pictures of Kuwaitis who went missing during their country's occupation by Iraq in an attempt to trace the people.

Al Jumhuriya, quoting a source at the Iraqi committee trying to trace the missing Kuwaitis, said pictures of the missing would be hung throughout the country in public places in an attempt to elicit information from Iraqi citizens.